

# The Star



**Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly**

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AMMAN, 22-28 AUGUST, 1996, VOLUME 7, NUMBER 15, 350 fils

اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

## Calm returns to South after bread riots

### King calls for unity, army eases curfew on Karak, government sticks to measures, opposition parties insist on Kabariti's resignation

By Raed Al Abed  
Star Staff Writer

KARAK—The army eased the four-day curfew Wednesday which it had imposed on this southern city of 20,000 people, after it was called in to stamp out anti-government riots which began on Friday at the center of town and spread to neighboring villages.

But while officials and residents described the situation as calm, observers believed the government was not about to withdraw army units until after tomorrow's Friday prayers. A number of residents and reporters who visited the city said tension was still high especially as the government continued to arrest activists in the governorate.

It was after last Friday's prayer when people were leaving Al Omayy Mosque in downtown Karak that things got out of hand. What began as a march soon turned into a protest and then a riot. While it is still unclear how the protest began, eyewitnesses say that at least five young men standing near the main circle began inciting the crowds by shouting anti-government slogans. These men are known as leftist activists and opponents to the government, one eyewitness told *The Star*.

Witnesses said people were emotionally ready for the protest in the wake of recent measures which raised the price of bread and other basic commodities.

"We had enough, our few dinars salary are swallowed by the all kinds of taxes, the rest disappears in stores and bakeries," said Mazen Al Ma'iet, a state post office employee, whose monthly salary is about

JD 140. "We have been living in austerity for the past six years. We thought we will get our hands on the fruits of peace! No fruits and not even peace."

About 300 people began the protest but were soon confronted by police who asked them to disperse. When the marchers refused, police moved in using tear-gas and clubs.

In Karak Eyad Ababseh, an internist whose living room became a makeshift surgical ward Friday for young men wounded by shrapnel from tear

gas canisters, described to the *Washington Post* how he bristled as he heard the government declare "no injuries took place" in Karak except to security troops.

Ababseh, 43, said he had watched horrified as policemen fired the gas into what he and other witnesses described as a peaceful demonstration, filling his house and those of his neighbors with caustic fumes.

"If they caught any boy of 12 or more they started to hit him—violent, brutal hitting," the doctor said. "My wife and I were

sitting here and we saw them."

It is not clear how the riots spread to neighboring villages and towns, but by late afternoon public disturbances were reported in Ma'an, Tafeliah, Mazar, Al Rabbeh and others. While the number of rioters was small, the biggest involving no more than 2000, the damage to property was high.

Police reported rioters throwing stones at them, breaking glass, overturning cars and burning public buildings. Confrontations continued in alleys between rioters, mostly boys and

young men, and anti-riot police who were called in to handle the situation. Rioters burned several government offices, schools and banks, and in some cases fired at the police, reports said.

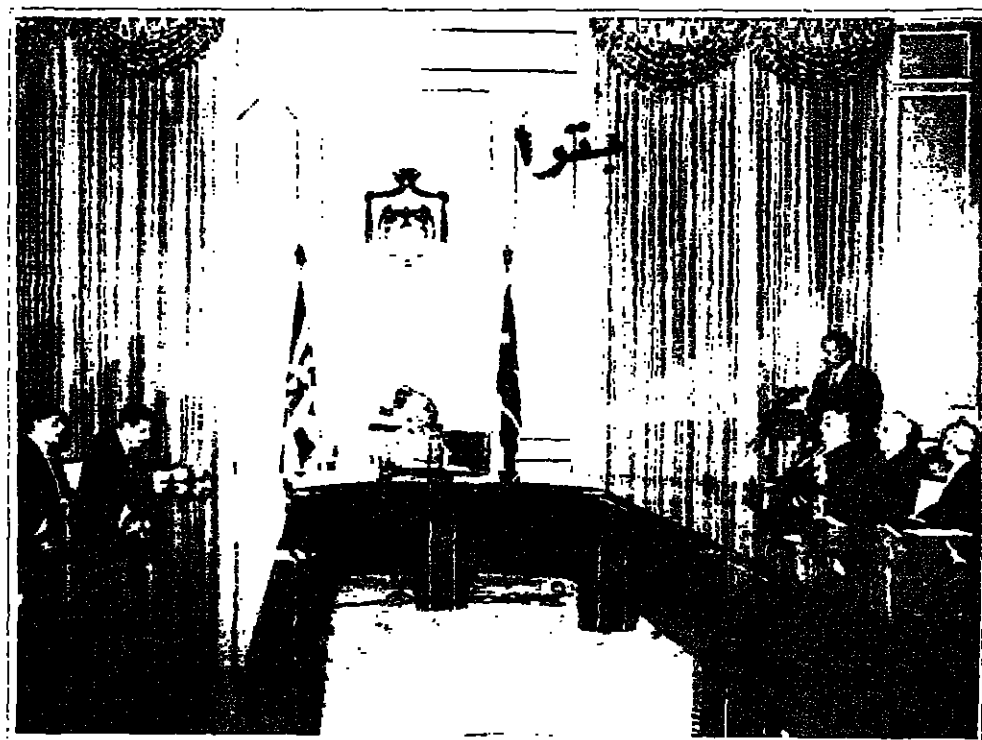
While the police was able to control the situation in Ma'an and other areas by Friday evening, rioting continued sporadically in Karak city until late hours and resumed after a tense lull by mid morning Saturday.

This is when the authorities

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Photo by Oliver Bras



His Majesty King Hussein said that unity in the country is a binding social force. Speaking at the Royal Court, Wednesday, to deputies and senators representing the southern governorates of Karak, Ma'an, Tafeliah and Aqaba, the King said that what happened in the south of the Kingdom earlier this week should make us more vigilant about the protection of democracy and shura, the need for a constructive dialogue and the adoption of a rational mentality as an approach. Also on Wednesday, the King also visited the Federation of Trade Unions and the Chamber of Commerce in Amman.

### Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party denies accusations

AMMAN (Star)—The government has accused the Iraqi Ba'ath Party of being directly involved in fomenting the latest riots which erupted in Karak and other southern towns.

At the center of these accusations is the Jordanian Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party (JASBP), a legalized party which has been active in Jordan for many years before the democratic process of 1989. JASBP, headed by Tayseer Al Himssi, is a major partner of the 11-party opposition bloc.

The party, whose pan-Arab political program is aligned with that of the ruling Ba'ath party in Iraq, is historically at odds with Syria's ruling Ba'ath party. The latter's programs and ideas find sympathy with the Progressive Arab Ba'ath Party (PABP) in Jordan which is also a legalized party.

The JASBP is believed to be strongly rooted in the southern region of Jordan and in Karak

### How the riots began and ended

Friday 16 August:

- About noon time and right after Friday prayers in downtown Karak, about three hundred people begin a protest against government's decision to raise bread prices. Soon protesters begin shouting anti-government slogans and call on for its resignation. Police attempts to prevent the demonstration but things get out of hand and soon the march turns into a riot.
- By evening, the protests spread to Ma'an, Tafeliah, Al Rabbeh, Al Mazar and Al Qaser—all in the south of the Kingdom. Again protesters clash with police and rioters begin to attack public buildings, banks and schools and setting some of them on fire. Anti-riot police are called in and use tear-gas to disperse protesters.
- In Karak about 200 protesters burn government and private properties and set fire to the Civil Consumer Corp. and the Arab Bank.
- Reports say that statements were distributed the day before which prompted people to protest against the hike in the bread prices.
- Reports say at least 13 people are injured in the clashes.
- Deputy Nazeeh Ammarin, who along with the mayor of Karak Mr Ahmed Mahadin were engaged in efforts to stop clashes, receives a reprimand from Prime Minister Abdel Karim Al Kabariti who asked him in a quite severe language not to interfere in the issue.
- By midnight, police controls the situation in Karak and other areas and protesters disperse.
- Speaker of the Lower House Mr Sa'ad Hayel Srour

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## The Karak riots: Making of a political crisis

By Raed Al Abed  
Star Staff Writer

AMMAN—The Kabariti government lifted bread subsidies and raised bread prices last Tuesday more than a month after it first leaked the news to the press, only to deny it at first, then to confirm it and finally to engage in a heated debate on the subject. The government had made it clear that such a move had to be taken to comply with the requirements of its economic reform program and to satisfy the demands of IMF.

The plan drew opposition from political parties, professional unions and many columnists who warned the government not to cross what they dubbed as the red line. Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti attempted to explain that the government had no intention to

deny Jordanians access to the loaf of bread and that every citizen will be adequately compensated for the difference in bread prices.

Opposition deputies rejected Kabariti's arguments and managed to get other deputies to join them in forming a special Lower House committee to study government proposals and offer its own. But last week, signs of a political crisis began to appear when 24 deputies boycotted the meetings of the extraordinary session. Mr Kabariti could wait no longer and approved the new measures one day before the House was to meet to hear the committee's recommendations.

Last Wednesday the House had a chaotic session. With 23 deputies staying away, only 23 deputies attending voted for the recommendations, which the

government had rejected anyway. Failing to get a majority, the motion was rejected. The government appeared to have won this political round.

Throughout the confrontation, His Majesty the King stood by Mr Kabariti reminding citizens that these measures were necessary to reform the economy and improve people's standard of living.

The government appeared sure that people would accept the measures even though, it was reported, it had been warned by intelligence services that they could lead to a public outburst.

While opposition parties accused the government of not heeding warnings and of being directly responsible for the riots that broke out in the south on Friday, causes of the incidents are still to be determined.

But it now appears that general economic conditions are to blame for a growing sense of frustration especially in the deprived areas of the Kingdom. Observers said, protesters appeared to be expressing their unhappiness with the government's policy and the failure of Jordan's 1994 peace treaty with Israel to bring prosperity as promised.

Economist Dr Fahd Al Faneh said that the cost of living in Jordan had risen by 25 percent in the last five years and is increasing at a rate of four percent annually. This figure does not include the recent increase in prices that included bread and other basic foodstuff.

On Saturday, after the King toured the worst-hit city of Karak, he blamed foreign elements, who "have chosen the current situation to gain sympathy and to exploit the sentiments of simple people."

It was difficult not to draw comparisons between what took place last week and between the price riots of 1989, which also erupted in the south. The 1989 riots were followed by political reforms culminated in the ending of martial law and the return to democratic rule.

But in contrast to the 1989 events, when the King dismissed the government of Zeid Rifai, he has reiterated his backing of Mr Kabariti and the government program.

But while riots ended, the political crisis that began a week ago is still going on. At least 11 opposition parties are determined to end Mr Kabariti's career prematurely. The

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## Castro celebrates 70th birthday with nostalgic mood

By Douglas Farah  
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

HAVANA—President Fidel Castro, known for decades for his soaring, fiery oratory, turned unusually soft-spoken and reflective earlier this past week at the first public celebration of his birthday in years.

"I never imagined I would live to be 70," mused Castro, who has spent more than half his life at the helm of Cuba's revolutionary government. "I am being punished for the self-sufficiency young people have, who think they have a whole lifetime to do things. Now, suddenly, you discover almost everything is behind you, and life has its limits."

No one is predicting that

Castro is about to reach those limits, but government officials and diplomats said reaching 70 seems to have turned the thoughts of one of the century's most ardent revolutionaries inward.

And as he turns inward, Cubans are, for the first time in decades, beginning to ask publicly what will happen when Castro is gone.

During the past week Castro, known to everyone here as Fidel, has engaged in an unprecedented display of nostalgia, declaring: "I understand I am not eternal or anything like that. I am flesh and blood, but that does not scare me or worry me."

Asked on national television what would happen to the revolution after his demise,



Castro answered that he was not worried.

"A well-made revolution, with so many people, with so many supporters, like this one has, what danger can there be for that revolution?" said Castro, a Jesuit-educated former lawyer, son of a Spanish father

and Cuban mother.

Ricardo Alarcon, president of the National Assembly, said that believing the revolution would disappear with Castro would be like thinking a "work of art disappears when the artist disappears."

While the comments are not extraordinary, it was the first time people here remember the question being raised openly in the Cuban media.

"He spends a lot more time talking publicly about his legacy," said one Latin American diplomat. "For the first time, he seems to want to make sure the issue is addressed."

Although his beard is grayer and his voice has lost some of its timbre, Castro apparently is in good health. He still appears in public fairly often, but no longer gives the marathon speeches he did until several years ago.

Few, including Castro, seem to have expected he

would still be leading his revolution 37 years after its triumph. Having taken power on 1 January, 1959, he is now the longest serving head of state in the hemisphere. President Clinton is the ninth US chief executive Castro has skirmished with, the ninth who vowed to topple his government, and the ninth to find his efforts largely frustrated.

"Believe me, it is not easy to adjust to the idea of being 70," Castro told a group of Pioneers, the Communist Party youth organization, celebrating his birthday last Tuesday. "I remember the many times I heard people talk about 70 years old, and I would say to myself, 'That is very old.'"

While his birthday is usually celebrated with little fanfare, this year there were several public events. Juvenal Rebeldé, the official Commu-

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## Major laws remain undiscussed with termination of extraordinary session

By Hamdan Al Hajj  
Special to the Star

ON THE same day that sporadic rioting broke out in Karak and other areas in southern Jordan, His Majesty King Hussein issued a Royal Decree terminating the shortest extraordinary session ever of the 12th Lower House which had started on 20 July. As a result, Lower House deputies will not have the opportunity to resume discussions of outstanding legislative issues at a time when Jordanians are looking forward to the ratification of some important draft laws.

Deputies were scheduled to debate in the extraordinary session 61 draft laws. Among the issues on the agenda of the session were the study of supply and economic policies, public administration, Jordanian-Arab relations and the agricultural policy. They were also supposed to follow up cases which relate to Public Liberties Law and citizen rights.

Other urgent matters on the deputies' agenda were the draft

laws of the Radio and Television Corp. and the Jordan News Agency (Petra), in addition to discussing amendments to Passports and Nationality, General Elections, Civil Status and the Social Security laws. Also deputies were to tackle an amendment law for Jordanian Universities, Banning Intoxicants, the law of Higher Education and the law of Civil and Military Pension.

But since the extraordinary session began, deputies were preoccupied with the government's plan to end subsidies of bread and fodder.

The legislative and executive branches spent most of the time in an attempt to reach a compromise over the issue. Deputies argued that when a large sector of people suffer from poverty and unemployment, lifting subsidies would harm them. But by last week, the government and the deputies had failed to reach a settlement, as the government went ahead with its plan to hike bread prices to reach 180-220 fils per kilo.

The government's decision forced 24 deputies (most of whom were Islamists and leftists) to boycott the session. Announcing that they will continue boycotting the session, the 24 deputies put the government in a critical position. The deputies' stance would have prevented the Lower House from continuing its agenda. Ironically, those who boycotted the extraordinary session were the same deputies who had petitioned the King to hold it.

The fourth and last ordinary session of the Lower House is expected to start on 1 October. If held on time, there is a possibility to make early parliamentary elections between July and September next year.

But opposition deputies are insisting on the resignation of the government and that it should reverse its decision on bread and fodder. They called on the government to stop its security measures adopted in

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**World Report**



# JORDAN

## WEEK

An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

### King speaks against chaos

■ Last week's riots in the south of the country has brought instant reaction from His Majesty King Hussein. A day following the riots, King Hussein personally went down to the city of Karak to calm the situation. Last Friday, following the riots, he spoke on television to all citizens in the country.



He said "Greetings from myself to all of you, old and young, men, women and children, the greetings of Al Hussein, to his comrades in arms, the soldiers of the country and its heroes, its men in the Arab Army, the Jordanian Armed Forces...."

His Majesty said that he is very sorry to hear that "a band of spiteful people, who have never believed in this homeland, Jordan, as a reality and a proud fortress, steadfast in face of storms and perils, deceived some others in a sinful attempt to plant the seeds of sedition which is cursed by God."

He said that the rioters "worked in several areas of the Kingdom, burning and destroying some state property—which is your property and other state property. In some areas, they started shooting at some security men and citizens from some houses here and there."

King Hussein emphasized that these elements don't belong to the Islamic Action Front but added "these misled and misleading elements are the remains of some who belong to parties operating outside Jordanian terms of ideology and belief." Furthermore, the King added that these elements undermine democracy.

In an exclusive interview with CNN, King Hussein said that parties supported by Iraq were using dissatisfaction over bread prices to subvert their government. Asked specifically who he believes are behind the riots, the King said, "I think some of these people are known to be the people who are either educated in Iraq or who have sympathies towards Iraq."

But so far the king has shown solid support for Kabarti, the focus of last week's protests, even though the vocal Muslim-led opposition demanded his removal.

### Bakeries' output halved

■ The bread price increase may have created havoc among bakeries last week. Because of the different price tags for the different kinds of bread, production in bakeries was halved by 50 percent throughout the Kingdom. Meanwhile, people have been flocking to dispensation centers to receive their bread allowance of JD 1.28 fils. Four days after the bread price hikes have become effective, more than 216,348 collected their bread coupons. This was at a cost of JD 858,000. However, there are reports of some difficulties in collecting the bread entitlement. Banks are refusing to give the allowances to women. Bank tellers are saying that it is the husband that must sign for the cash payments. But in some cases the male head of the family is not in Jordan and what this actually means is that the family loses out on their cash dispensation.

### Electricity privatization set for September

■ The privatization of Jordan's Electricity Authority (JEA) has been put forward for a while. The privatization of

the JEA into a shareholding company, which was supposed to take effect on 17 August, will now take place on 1 September. Sources said that the JEA wants to hold off the transfer so that the new public electricity law would be made official and the new company could be registered with the Registrar of Companies. It is understood that transfer into private hands would result in 200 job losses. But workers are not worried saying that they would be moved to other government departments.

### Ministry gets new quarters

■ The Ministry of Public Works is to get a new building at a cost of JD 4 million. Situated on the 7th Circle, the Minister of Public Works says the building will take eight months to complete. The present building of the ministry will be used by the Lower House deputies who have been complaining about the lack of space in the Parliament building.

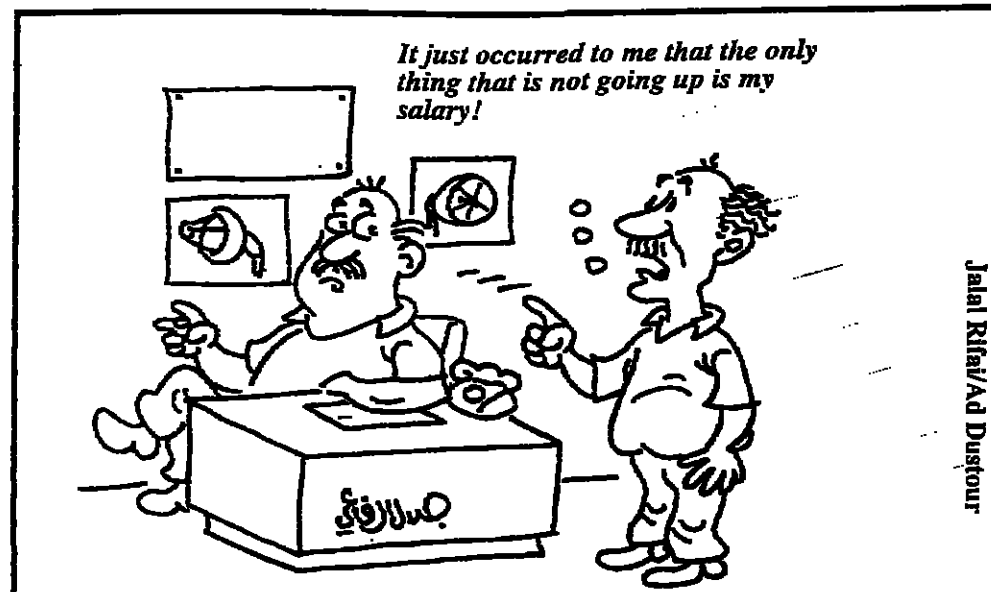
### Kabarti, Ammarin tiff ends

■ A tiff between Prime Minister Abdel Karim Al Kabarti and the Karak Lower House

### US gives Jordan preferential customs duty treatment

■ The US Congress has recently renewed the US Generalized System of Preference GSP program through 31 May, 1997 and retroactive to 31 July, 1995. The GSP program extends preferential customs duty treatment to products from certain developing countries, such as Jordan, exported to the United States. The renewal of GSP takes effect on 1 October 1996 which is the start of the US Government's new fiscal year.

The US Government is pleased that Congress has renewed the GSP allowing the US to provide trade preferences to Jordan. Importers have 180 days to file with customs for reimbursement for duties paid from August 1 1995 through September 30, 1996 on products which fall under GSP program. They will be reimbursed after October 1, 1996.



Jalal Rifai/Ad Dufour

### Anti-narcotic agents continue campaign against drug trafficking

AMMAN (Star)—The Anti-Narcotic Department (AND) said that its agents apprehended 45 persons for drug trafficking in the past two weeks. They included Jordanians, Arabs and foreign nationals.

During a press conference, AND Director, Col. Nazih Al Shraideh, said that his department arrested 12 people involved in drug cases, five of which in drug peddling and seven cases of promoting and using drugs.

About 23.45 kilograms of heroin and 42 kilograms of hashish were seized, Col. Shraideh estimated that the street value of these drugs is JD 1 million.

"Although drug trafficking is on the rise in Jordan, it has not reached that of organized crime," Col. Shraideh said. "The drugs were stored in Jordan to be prepared for smuggling to neighboring countries, since the local market can't accommodate such amounts."

These cases were under observation by the agents of the Anti-Narcotic Department for the past two months. Many drug smugglers use Jordan as a transit point to other neighboring countries.

Al Hasa, a desert area in the south of Jordan, took the lion's share, about 11 kilograms of heroin were seized, 16 persons were involved, 14 of whom Jordanians, and two from other Arab countries. In a joint campaign, AND in cooperation with other anti-narcotic departments in Arab countries seized about 10.45 kilograms of heroin in Amman, and six persons of Arab and foreign nationalities were arrested.

Another 42 kilograms of hashish were seized in the free-zone near Al Safawi, eastern Badia, two persons of an Arab nationality were arrested.

One kilogram of heroin was seized in Yajouz, north Amman, one Arab citizen was involved. In Aqaba, another kilogram of heroin was seized, seven Jordanians were involved. Seven cases of drug use and peddling were apprehended around the Kingdom, 13 Jordanians were involved. Col. Shraideh said that all involved persons are taken to court.

In cooperation with AND, some Arab countries succeeded in apprehending about 1.1 million tablets of hallucination—a brand used by drug addicts—and 45 kilograms of hashish. ■

## The Karak riots

Continued from page 1

11-party opposition bloc, which was formed to confront the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, represents extreme and moderate left, pan-Arabists and a strongly organized Islamic parties. Historically, these parties were part of the strong underground movement.

Former government minister Ibrahim Izziddin disagrees with the way Mr Kabarti han-

dled Parliament. "I think the government should have seized the opportunity of accepting the compromised suggestions of the special House committee," he told *The Star*. "Not because it will only satisfy Parliament, but because in carrying any structural reform whether in administration or economy, you need to have political backing, and I think this government had denied herself the political backing of Parliament for this

structural change, something that all the previous governments since 1989 had enjoyed."

Mr Izziddin added that Mr Kabarti should have thought of the political cost as well as the economic benefits of his policy. "It was a political decision which did not work, it might work economically, but definitely the political damage has been done."

Many Jordanians whom *The Star* talked to asked the decision makers to give greater concern to the southern part of the country. Taking a close look at the financial, human and cultural needs of the people there, is one of these demands. They objected to having deputies join the ranks of government and called on the government to return to normal as residents were allowed few hours every day to shop and care for their business.

This week Mr Kabarti asked all government departments to prepare for an austerity state budget for 1997. How much will this reflect on ordinary citizens and their life standard will have to be seen. ■

## Calm returns to South

Continued from page 1

decided to call in the army and by Saturday afternoon army units were moved into Karak and immediately imposed a curfew. By evening, it appeared that the riots were over.

Police began arresting those suspected of inciting people and of participating in the riots. His Majesty the King blamed elements tied to Iraq of planning the incidents and promised to retaliate with an iron fist. Police began rounding up leftist activists, who have a strong traditional base in Karak, and members of the Arab Ba'ath Party.

On Sunday, Karak was under military control. Life began to return to normal as residents were allowed few hours every day to shop and care for their business.

Members of the army's special forces and Interior Ministry police set up roadblocks, with armored personnel carriers poised outside Karak Sunday, and attempted to turn back reporters near the Karak Castle.

Tribal heads began informal meetings and publicly denounced the riots which inflicted heavy damage to public property. But while people disapproved of rioting, they still believed they had a right to express their dissatisfaction with recent government decisions which lifted bread subsidies effectively more than doubling its price.

"We're not asking for meat," Amr Habashneh, 32, a slightly built driver who supports a family of four on about JD 150 a month, told an American reporter. "We're not asking for luxuries. All we ask is bread. We'll eat it bare."

"People here are living under a grave conditions. As part of my job I use to visit houses, in the city and villages near here. I saw their empty refrigerators, their suffering is serious," said Sami Hejazi, a social worker of the Ministry of Social Development in Karak. ■

## Laws remain undiscussed

Continued from page 1

reaction to Karak protests. They also urged the government to release those arrested in the wake of the riots, although these demands are unlikely to be met at the present time. There have been some hints at the possibility of forming a new cabinet. Others predict that King Hussein will appoint a well-known Jordanian personality to replace Mr Kabarti. But the King has denied that such plans are being contemplated now.

The most important issue at the present time is to restore stability and security in the country. People and investors must receive assurances that their properties and investments in the country are in safe hands.

Economic observers say if the present government maintains the economic adjustment program, the Jordanian dinar will hold its value. This will also mean that Jordan will be able to apply for soft loans and grants, particularly from European countries.

Accordingly, an economic breakthrough is expected to take place once Jordan concludes its economic reform program which is to be completed by the beginning of 1998. ■

## Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party denies accusations

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in particular. "The accusations against our party are completely baseless," Lawyer Ahmad Al Najdawi, spokesman for the JASBP, told *The Star*. "By making these claims, the government wants to whitewash the negative results of its policies."

Mr Najdawi said that if the government believes that people support its measures, "we challenge it to allow them to demonstrate to express themselves."

Mr Najdawi said the opposition parties have presented to the government a request to hold a peaceful rally for a million hungry people, but that Amman's governor refused to grant a permit.

"The Iraqi Ba'ath and our party have the same pan-Arabist principles," said Mr Najdawi. "But each party has its independent internal platform." He added that "our party was present in Jordan even before the birth of the Iraqi Ba'ath Party as our party was founded in the early 1940s."

Mr Najdawi claimed that many members of his party were recently arrested. He mentioned lawyer Omar Abu Al Ragheb, a human rights activist and member of the Arab Organization for Human Rights in Jordan. ■

## Bread issue gives parties teeth to bite with

By Star Staff Writer

AMMAN GOVERNOR Mr Tala'at Al Nawaiseh rejected Tuesday a request to hold the "hungry one million demonstration". The appeal was made by the Islamic Action Front (IAF) on behalf of the 11-party opposition. Sources at the IAF confirmed that it will follow all legal steps to hold such a demonstration.

The opposition parties and professional associations are entering a tough fight with the government. They are blaming it for the eruption of the riots and calling for its resignation.

Since the beginning of the bread dilemma last month, the opposition formed a committee called the National Committee for Defending the People's Living Standards. Members of the committee held a press conference early this week describing the riots in the south as a spontaneous popular eruption, with no foreign powers behind it.

"When the 1989 uprising in the south took place, they accused foreign circles, till now not one of these circles have been unveiled," said Melhim Al Tal, who spoke on behalf of the committee.

"What happened in Karak was an inevitable outcome of government policies," Al Tal said.

"The government and security forces did not allow people to demonstrate peacefully. They turned down a request of some Jordanians to stage a peaceful march."

The Ba'ath and leftist parties are accused by the government of being behind the riots in Karak. Arrests targeted members of these parties since the beginning of the riots on Friday.

These parties agreed that some of its members joined the demonstrations, but rejected the claim that they planned the riots.

"We warned the government that this would happen, but it ignored our call," said Saleem Al Nahas, general secretary of Hashd.

The opposition spokesman said it is sad that "the government is treating the people, Parliament and all organizations as being corrupt and sheep smugglers. Now it is accusing them of being misled by foreign groups," Al Tal added.

The Muslim Brotherhood put the blame on the government saying it bears full responsibility for the unrest in the south. In a statement, it called on the government to resign and urged for political and economic reform.

Through this statement, the opposition succeeded in reuniting its ranks after several government's attempts to crack down on the opposition front. Assigning two leading figures in his ministerial cabinet was one attempt by Mr Kabarti to recruit members of the opposition. In fact, Mr Kabarti succeeded in excluding the Unionist Democratic Party—an integration of three leftist parties—from the opposition coalition by assigning Lower House deputy Mustafa Sheikhat as a minister of agriculture. Dr Kamal Nasser was another example who was appointed as minister of administrative development.

Observers believe that the recent events have presented the opposition with fresh ammunition to counter government moves against them. Weakened for the past two years and embattled by the peace treaty that Jordan signed in 1994, party faithfuls believe that this is their chance to beef up their popular support in the country in time for the parliamentary elections in November 1997. ■

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By Star Staff

AMMAN (Jordanian Press) — Mr. Ahmad Al Lawzi rejected Tuesday's request to hold a session of the parliament which had started on 20 July.

The opposition and professional unions blame the government for the eruption of riots in the south and call on the government to resign.

A small riot broke out in Tafaileh district in east Amman late Saturday. Rioters clash with police who control the situation.

Monday 19 August:  
■ In an interview with the Middle East Broadcasting Center (MBC) the King says there are no intentions to carry out governmental changes. He again affirms his belief that the perpetrators of the south riots had links with Iraq.

■ Prime Minister Kabariti says that the situation in Karak is normal and that he does not intend to resign or review the latest policies.

■ Karak mayor Mahadin says the protest began as a peaceful march which became violent due to mishandling of the situation by security forces.

■ A press conference is held at IAF headquarters in Amman in which a coalition of 11 political parties, 12 professional associations, unions and public figures call for government resignation. They also protest against threats that deputy Ammanin allegedly received from the Prime Minister. But later on Monday 12 associations deny that they signed such a statement.

■ The politburo of Hashd—People's Democratic Party—announces that 12 of its members are arrested. Also, it was announced that more than 40 members of the Jordanian Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party are arrested.

## People & Politics

### White revolution or bread riots?

■ We will have to wait and see what the official investigation into the cause of the bread riots in southern Jordan will uncover. Already the government has made charges that elements sympathetic to Iraq were indeed behind the initial spark that abused public feelings and sentiments in the wake of the government's decision to raise the price of bread.



Kabariti

But while law and order appear to have been restored in the south and those responsible for the destruction of property are being sought to stand trial, we should not forget that a political crisis still looms in the capital between the Lower House and the government.

With the dissolution of the extraordinary session of Parliament, the deputies have now lost their chance to bring pressure to bear on Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti. If we still remember, the Lower House threw out of the window recommendations adopted by a special House committee to alter government policy on bread subsidies, in effect giving its blessing to the bread increase.

But the political crisis won't just go away for Mr. Kabariti. What had started as a live and let live agreement between the cunning Mr. Kabariti and the opposition deputies, including the Islamists—although most voted against him in the confidence session—has now turned into a live and let die vendetta.

With the 11 opposition parties choosing to close the door for any possible compromise, one can only expect the worst if and when Parliament meets for its next ordinary session. Mr. Kabariti has stated that he does not wish to resign and that he was satisfied with his government's performance. Only God knows what the man is thinking about now, but he must feel frustrated and bitter about the way things have turned out. Instead of a white revolution he will now be remembered for the bread riots. His Camelot never saw the light of day. He now has to prepare for an ensuing confrontation and we hate to say it, but it looks as if the future of Jordanian democracy now hinges on the outcome of that confrontation.

This is the time when the wise leadership of His Majesty the King comes into play. He has set the rules and traditions for dialogue and shura. These traditions have not been adhered to in the latest crisis. Both sides may want to accept that there is a lesson to be taught here—that is if both sides wish to compromise!

### Official media: See no evil...

■ Among the casualties of the two-day riots in southern Jordan was the official government-run media. For the duration of the crisis, radio and television were absent from the center of events. Worried citizens had to turn to foreign media for up-to-date developments in the south while the official media limited its coverage to brief government statements and official reaction. While one would not have expected television and radio to sensationalize or incite, the least that the official media could have done was to keep citizens abreast with latest developments rather than allowing them to turn to Radio Monte Carlo, BBC Arabic Service or Radio Israel in Arabic.



Muasher

The official media, like the government, was caught unaware and while many Jordanians saw scenes of the riots and destruction on neighboring TV stations or via satellite, Jordan Television took its time before showing scenes of the aftermath. Radio and TV also failed to convey to viewers what most had already known, that a political crisis was brewing with the opposition parties calling for the government's resignation.

Such lack of a clear editorial policy enhanced the sense of confusion that many felt in the wake of the crisis. The failure of the official media in keeping its viewers informed is classic in the Arab world where government-run media becomes claustrophobic in the midst of an internal crisis. Even Minister of Information Dr. Marwan Muasher press conferences were not aired in full, leaving citizens to speculate.

Three days after the riots and the army's control of Kerak, JTV's News at Eight bulletin gave sketchy and ambiguous coverage of news failing to mention, for example, that the city was still under curfew.

Such a failure coincided with a new look for the eight o'clock news bulletin with new music signature and background showing flickering TV screens and seemingly busy editors. Unfortunately, the quality of the newscast was no equal for the new flashy look.

The official media could have played a positive role in all this. It could have focused people's attention on the destruction that the rioters had inflicted on their city and on public property. It could have proved itself as a national media, a public trust, by going to the people and showing that what had taken place in Kerak and other cities in the south is not approved by the majority of Jordanians regardless of whether they support the government's actions or not. That is a democracy, the channels of communications, including those of radio and television, are open for constructive dialogue at all levels. It could have proved that Jordanians condemn acts of violence and destruction of public and private property and that what happened in Kerak and elsewhere is really the work of a few inciters who were using a legitimate cause of grievance to their interests.



■ His Majesty King Hussein visited Al Ramtha District, Tuesday. Speaking to a crowd of several thousand people, the King said it was vital to maintain unity among Jordanians in the country. He called upon the people to avoid actions that could lead to chaos. He said "I depend on your unity and cohesion and determination to march forward along the path of reform and hardwork to be carried out in an atmosphere characterized by shura, dialogue and true democracy, respect for human rights and respect for law and order as we stand in the face of anarchy and harmful actions." He was accompanied by Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdallah and Prince Ali, Prime Minister Abdel Al Karim Kabariti and high Jordanian officials.

## Japanese Ambassador to Jordan, Kimura 'Japan has not been an outsider to this region'

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jordan-Japan relations are thriving. On the eve of the visit of the Japanese Foreign Minister, Mr. Ikeda Yukihiko, to Jordan, The Star's Aida Al Tawil talked to the Japanese Ambassador in Amman, Mr. Takayuki Kimura. Mr. Kimura is a veteran diplomat who has long been in government service. He talks about the Foreign Minister's visit, which is part of a regional tour, the peace process and Japanese assistance to Jordan. Excerpts follow:

You have many projects in Jordan like water and tourism. Did you reach an agreement with the Ministry of Tourism over such projects?

We have offered them a comprehensive development plan proposing projects to be implemented over the coming five years at an estimated \$800,000.

Could you tell us about the Japanese assistance to Jordan in this fiscal year?

This year the amount of assistance is comparable to the years before. I cannot give a specific figure, but we would like to support Jordan in these difficult times. Our assistance is on projects basis. They will be finalized. I'm optimistic they are good projects.

How does aid to Jordan take place?

Japan's help to Jordan is mostly in the form of grants, soft loans and technical assistance; we have been the largest donor to Jordan in the past several years and we want to maintain this.

What is your country's reaction towards the latest US controversy with Europe and other industrial countries about the American-imposed embargo on Iran and Libya?

We consider the US embargo against Iran and Libya, whatever intentions they have, shouldn't have occurred. They contradict with the principles of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Does Japan face any budget deficit similar to other industrial countries?

Japan is not an exception, unfortunately. We have experienced a cut or reduction in the

budget...What Japan faces is a decrease in the budget's expansion. We used to have about 8 percent increase but the coming year it looks that we are going to have only a two percent increase.

When will your foreign Minister arrive in Jordan?

The foreign minister is arriving on 24 August. He is expected to see His Majesty King Hussein, Crown Prince Hassan, and will have a working session with Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti.

What is the purpose of the visit?

The purpose of the visit is to have first-hand look at the present situation in this part of the Middle East and to find out what Japan can do in support of the peace process as well as the economic reforms that are courageously pursued. He is going to visit Egypt, Syria, Israel, Gaza besides Jordan and to see the heads of these states, like Presidents Assad and Mubarak, Prime Minister Netanyahu as well as PNA leader Arafat. He will discuss with them the present situation in the peace process.

How do you see the role of Japan in the present era?

Our role will be in encouraging the peace process and ensuring its momentum. We strongly support His Majesty and his actions in trying to move the peace process and his courageous steps not only for the sake of his country but for the sake of Arab countries and the world. Japan has not been an outsider to this region. We are involved because it is our responsibility as a second major economic bloc as well as for the long term security of Japan to have a major role in the area. This is a major issue for Japan.

Do you see similar experiences between Jordan and Japan?

We want to express our support to the economic reform in Jordan. We are different from any other donor countries because we have similar experience after the Second World



Kimura

War. So we know the difficulties Jordan faces because we have personal experience

including myself. There was no food to eat. We have gone through poverty and through process of development. We would like to express our support to the policies of Jordan.

The foreign minister definitely will discuss certain projects, with his counterparts like bridges over Jordan river.

Tourism and water treatment, water supply from Jordan Valley into Amman through Zai in Salt will all be on the agenda. I can say that concrete steps will be taken through the visit. Japan is providing the ministry of tourism with a plan for establishing a National Museum as well.

The plan includes proposals on infrastructures concerning tourist sites in Jordan like the Amman Citadel, Jerash, and Petra. ■

### How the riots began and ended

Continued From page 1

and Speaker of the Upper House Mr. Ahmad Al Lawzi expressed regret over the incidents in Karak and elsewhere.

■ King orders immediate termination of the extraordinary session of the parliament which had started on 20 July.

Saturday 17 August:

■ Late Friday and early Saturday the King delivers a televised speech in which he says that rioters were affiliated with foreign parties who were conspiring against the country. The King says no injuries had occurred among civilians although some policemen were injured after they were shot at by protesters. He acquitted the IAF from any charges blaming the protests on leftist parties and hinting at a possible Iraqi involvement in the situation. He says that he has given orders to retaliate with an iron fist against instigators.

■ By mid-morning, tension leads to fresh protests in Karak. Rioters burn a Ministry of Education building.

■ Clashes with anti-riot police confine and two people are reported injured in the center of the city while another two are injured during clashes at Al Marjeh district at the outskirts of the city.

■ By the afternoon, army intervenes and quickly controls the city placing it under curfew.

■ Anti-riot police are replaced by soldiers in the evening.

■ King visits Karak to inspect security forces which participated in controlling the aggravated situation. He also meets with tribal heads.

■ Government meets in an emergency session Saturday and says it is satisfied with measures taken to control the situation.

■ Opposition parties and professional unions blame the government for the eruption of riots in the south and call on the government to resign.

■ A small riot breaks out in Tafaileh district in east Amman late Saturday. Rioters clash with police who control the situation.

Sunday 18 August:

■ During interviews with the JTV and CNN, the King assures the public that the situation in Karak and the south is calm and that all measures have been taken to ensure stability.

■ Phone lines with Karak are cut off from early Sunday. TCC says it was due to congestion.

■ Curfew in Karak is lifted in the afternoon for a short period. Army maintains security and situation is reported calm.

■ Minister of Information Marwan Muasher confirms that only those who were involved in damaging public and private properties and looting were arrested. Press reports say dozens of leftist activists were rounded up by police in the south and in Amman.

■ Karak mayor Mahadin says the protest began as a peaceful march which became violent due to mishandling of the situation by security forces.

■ A press conference is held at IAF headquarters in Amman in which a coalition of 11 political parties, 12 professional associations, unions and public figures call for government resignation. They also protest against threats that deputy Ammanin allegedly received from the Prime Minister. But later on Monday 12 associations deny that they signed such a statement.

■ The politburo of Hashd—People's Democratic Party—announces that 12 of its members are arrested. Also, it was announced that more than 40 members of the Jordanian Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party are arrested.

Monday 19 August:

■ In an interview with the Middle East Broadcasting Center (MBC) the King says there are no intentions to carry out governmental changes. He again affirms his belief that the perpetrators of the south riots had links with Iraq.

■ Prime Minister Kabariti says that the situation in Karak is normal and that he does not intend to resign or review the latest policies.

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## Castro celebrates 70th birthday

Continued from page 1

nist Party youth newspaper, ran an eight-page special insert with headlines such as "The Lion Tamer."

Castro also paid a visit last Thursday to his childhood home and the graves of his parents in the province of Holguin, accompanied by his friend, Nobel Literature Prize winner Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

"The commander is much more reflective now," said a senior government official. "It is a very human reaction—you turn 70, and you know people your age who are dying, so you begin to think about the end."

Reflective is not a word that was often associated with Castro when he led an ill-equipped band of guerrillas to unexpected victory over the US-

backed government of Fulgencio Batista. He often seemed impetuous as he nationalized industries, declared his revolution socialist, allowed the Soviet Union to station nuclear missiles on the island and rallied against the evils of capitalism and the United States.

Although he established educational and health systems regarded as among the best in Latin America, Castro's human-rights record was criticized, almost from the beginning, of the revolution, when opponents were executed by firing squads, jailed or forced to leave the country.

Castro weathered the US-backed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 and an ongoing economic embargo, as well as numerous CIA attempts to assassinate him.

And he appears, against tremendous odds, to have weathered the collapse of Cuba's economic lifeline to the former Soviet Union.

Castro does not seem overly worried by the latest attacks on him.

Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole criticized Clinton in a May speech for not standing up to "a washed-out, isolated Communist dictator in Cuba." Hundreds of thousands of Cuban exiles live in the United States, and they often view Castro as the Devil incarnate.

"The CIA tried everything against my health, but here we are," Castro said.

"We have arrived at 70." The crumbling of the former Soviet Bloc cost Cuba billions of dollars in commerce and aid, and from 1990 to 1994 the

economy shrank by almost 40 percent. To survive, Castro has been forced to initiate limited economic reforms that have led to timid private-sector initiatives. The reforms have been carried out haltingly, and Castro has made no secret that he finds them necessary but very distasteful.

Still, the economic free fall appears to have ended, and economists here predict growth of about five percent this year.

While few doubt that he remains deeply involved in the day-to-day running of the government—Castro has a reputation for micromanaging the economy and favorite projects—in the past three years new leaders have begun to appear, giving key speeches when Castro is absent or watches from the podium. The most prominent is Carlos Lage, the low-key 44-year-old economic czar who has been close to Castro for the past 10 years. ■

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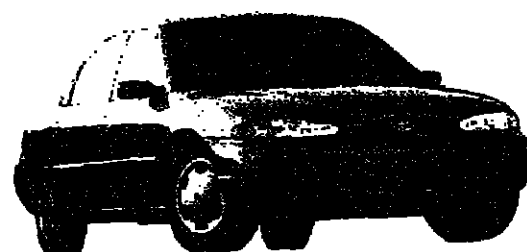
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LURIE'S WORLD



## Our Say...

### Learning from the riots

JORDANIANS NEED to move beyond the tragic events that rocked the southern towns of the Kingdom last week. The two-day riots which resulted in damage to public and private property must not be allowed to become a cause for frustration and political disarray.

Regardless of the immediate causes of the riots, the government must move swiftly to restore national dialogue and maintain political as well as economic reform.

But the riots must also provide us with clues about the psychological state of mind of many Jordanians. Condemning such destructive acts is not enough. An in-depth investigation of the social and economic realities of these and other deprived areas of the Kingdom must be launched immediately if we are to continue with the economic reform program that we believe is a must for national welfare.

Bitter reform prescriptions are not an invention of the Kabarti government. Jordanians must understand that while adjustment is painful and recovery requires sacrifices, the government cannot afford to follow a policy of appeasement at the expense of national interest. Having said this, the government must be vigilant taking into consideration the social impact of its policies at a time when it is the first to admit that many Jordanians are victims of poverty and unemployment.

What was probably missing from the seemingly democratic debate that took place few days before the eruption of the riots is constructive and responsible dialogue. Both the government and our deputies share the blame. While it is easy to round up few reckless and frustrated young men in Karak and other towns and blame them for what had happened, the real challenge for the government and the deputies is to come forward and admit that both could have handled the issue more responsibly.

We have warned before from the danger of ending with a political discord over an issue that the majority of Jordanians consider fundamental to their livelihood. But that is precisely what happened when the government and the Lower House reached a deadlock on the issue of bread and fodder subsidies. Could the deadlock have been avoided? There are those who believe so.

Opposition parties and the government appear to have moved away from the real issues and instead decided to raise the ante and draw up the bridges. At one point or the other, the democratic process must have hit a stumbling block. The real spark, we believe, was lit irresponsibly here in Amman.

It is at this stage of the crisis that His Majesty King Hussein's guidance is needed. His call for dialogue and his statements that there will be no retreat from the democratic path is also a call to all those in a position of responsibility to move around the political gridlock and safeguard the democratic process.

The tragic riots of last week need to be addressed not only in terms of their immediate causes, but also from the social and economic realities that permitted them to happen in the first place. That requires political as well as economic reform. Without one, the other is unlikely to pull through. ■

## Letters to the Editor

### Excellent Online Service

To the editor:

I am a Palestinian/Jordanian/Arab-American. I live in the US and have always been a strong advocate of Arab newspapers having international editions to present Arab views about international and local events, and also to present the human side of the Arab experience to the world.

News reports, features, social commentary presented in an international forum represent some of the best public relations available to a country like Jordan.

With the advent of Internet technology, this is made all the more easy, because the Internet is a world forum, and is freely accessible by anyone with a PC. I applaud *The Star*, *Ad Dustour*, and other Jordanian newspapers about having the initiative to develop Websites. It really reflects Jordan's development as a main center of information in the Middle East.

Alongside of reports of our societal suc-

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cesses and strengths. I urge you to present the human side of our society such as the plight of returnees from Kuwait, and Palestine so that the world can feel with our people's suffering and dispel the myths of Arab violence, etc.

Nabil Khoury, M.D.

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# The case of Iraq United Nations as guardian of human rights

By Maggie Grey

THE UNITED Nations, as the source of a number of internationally recognized instruments of human rights accords and as the agency behind such bodies as UNICEF, UNHCR and WHO, has become identified as the primary international guardian of human rights. Not all of the policies pursued by the UN however, are consonant with such an identity. This is the case with the five-and-a-half-year-old UN sanctions against Iraq.

The Security Council imposed and maintains the sanctions, partly to improve the "human rights situation" in Iraq while other UN agencies, namely the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) have repeatedly argued that humanitarian considerations in regard to food and medical supplies are being ignored and that, as a result, the population of Iraq is in dire peril.

According to FAO's latest report, adequate humanitarian welfare can only be guaranteed if the economy can be put back in proper shape enabling it to draw on its own resources, and that clearly cannot occur as long as the embargo remains in force.

Iraq is a country of vast deserts and limited water supply. Like most regional neighbors, Iraq for many years prior to the Gulf crisis was not able to produce sufficient food to feed its population of then 18 million.

Prior to the crisis, approximately \$2 billion was spent annually importing 66 percent of all food consumed in Iraq. According to FAO data for 1988, imported food grains represented 36 percent of total food imports; meat products 16 percent and sugar 10 percent. These are not luxury items for a political elite but dietary staples and without them a population might reasonably be expected to starve or be malnourished.

It is commonly believed that these economic sanctions excepted "humanitarian supplies". Evidence of this widespread belief is given by an *Economist* article which states that "though the UN's sanctions exclude food and medicine, the ban on oil sales has left Iraqi families with no money to buy either". The truth however is that while a clause in Resolution 661 did make an exception for "humanitarian circumstances," it failed to specify any agency responsible for evaluating these circumstances; nor did it establish any fixed criteria by which this could be done. In effect, the Sanctions Committee (composed of the permanent Security Council members) allowed arbitrary standards to govern this crucial aspect of the sanctions programme. With the exception of humanitarian donations supplied by expatriates, overseas Muslim communities, aid agencies and the UN's own agencies such as UNICEF and WFP, only extremely limited food and medical supplies have reached Iraq since August 1990.

When a 1991 UN inspection team under the Agha Khan argued that \$3.6 billion for food, health care, sanitation and water was urgently needed, the Sanctions Committee argued against this. Eventually, UN Resolution 706 agreed to allow Iraq to sell, under strict UN supervision, \$1.6 billion worth of oil and oil products on the condition that the money be spent on humanitarian imports only. However, from this amount there were first to come deductions for Kuwaiti war reparations and costs for the UN weapons destruction program in Iraq; estimated by a UN report to be at least \$666.3 million. Although a Secretary General's report then advised that "in the light of these findings, the Security Council may wish to review its earlier decision to limit Iraq oil sales to \$1.6 billion," the limit was maintained.

Until late 1995, Saddam Hussein refused to co-operate with these arrangements, arguing that the proviso that only international humanitarian agencies be allowed to distribute the aid, infringed Iraq's sovereignty.

Other attempts at compromise were made with limited success. In April 1994, \$250 million from frozen assets in British and Swiss banks, was withdrawn for the purchase of humanitarian aid. Also in 1994, the oil pipeline from Iraq to Turkey, which was being corroded by static deposits of oil was permitted to be periodically "flushed" to cleanse it. Each flushing yields about 12 million barrels of oil, for which Turkey gives Iraq humanitarian aid, not

cash.

The first real breakthrough did not come until late last year when Security Council Resolution 986 allowed Iraq to sell up to \$1 billion worth of oil every 90 days; of this, approximately 66 percent was for humanitarian supplies and 33 percent for Kuwaiti reparations. The deal was to extend for six months but with the expectation of further extensions. In fact however, the US within the Security Council, has found fault with practical aspects of the deal, especially in regard to the distribution of food to Kurdish communities in the "safe haven" above the 36th parallel, and the scheme is still to be realized. In one concession to rationality, the UN has finally agreed that distribution within Iraq may be undertaken by the government, under UN monitoring; distribution to the Kurdish "safe haven" may be made only by UN agencies.

As early as November 1991, or approximately one year after sanctions were imposed, a World Development study team found that most of the criteria for declaring "famine conditions", that is drastic reduction of food intake; exorbitant food prices; consumption of wild plants and other "famine foods"; large scale depletion of household assets; and even the emergence of open conflicts between family members ... over the allocation of food were already present among a majority of Iraqis. The same team further argued that "public provisioning without economic regeneration can only transform Iraq into a vast



Sanctions bite at infirm, but is there anybody listening?

A significant irony behind the spectre of this "vast refugee camp" brought about at least in part by the UN's own policy of sanctions lies in the moral rhetoric with which these sanctions have been justified. Early Coalition declaration of Iraqi human rights abuses created an atmosphere of moral superiority which was encouraged in public perceptions of sanctions and later, war policies. Sanctions (and indeed the war) were partly predicated on the restoration of Iraqi human rights. After the war, the maintenance of sanctions was again partly predicated on human rights as is apparent in this public address by President Bush in February 1992:

The Saddam Hussein regime continues to violate basic human rights by repressing the Iraqi civilian population and depriving it of humanitarian assistance. ... The Iraqi regime has refused to accept these resolutions and has thereby con-

stant mothers and maternity cases.

It is also the case that both "Protocols contain direct prohibitions of civilian starvation as a method of warfare, applicable in international and non-international armed conflicts." Nor is it the case that intention, is relevant; effect alone is sufficient to warrant concern and to engage the guarantees of both the Geneva Convention and the Protocols against civilian starvation. If this is the case in wartime, one might assume that in "peacetime" civilian starvation is even more to be abjured, but apparently not, at least not by the UN Security Council.

Rights to food in the post-war period. Once the surrender had been signed, the Geneva Convention and Protocols no longer applied but other UN-established human rights instruments clearly do: access to food and basic health services are recognized rights under the International Bill of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). "Universal respect for and observance of human rights" is an obligation under the UN charter itself.

While the Security Council has the right to impose economic sanctions and to obligate states to support the implementation of those sanctions, the UN Charter, under Article 55 nevertheless necessitates the United Nations and presumably the Security Council, to promote "higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development" as well as to promote "solutions of international economic, social, health and related problems" and "universal respect for and observance of human rights."

All of these internationally recognized instruments of human rights have clearly been abused by the Security Council in regard to Iraq and if one looks beyond the blanket justification of "maintaining international peace and security," at the specific justifications for the sanctions, the reasons appear to favour Western hegemonic interests rather than those of the Iraqi population or even that more abstract respect for human rights which one might assume is a fundamental premise of all UN policies. The identification, monitoring and destruction of Iraqi non-conventional weapons (while clearly a necessary programme) is still proceeding and has not been aided by the sanctions; the political stabilization of the Middle Eastern region has been jeopardized by history's largest arms sales ever and Saddam Hussein has further consolidated power and increased his repressive security apparatus.

After five and a half years, the sanctions have demonstrated no positive achievements whatsoever and their maintenance cannot possibly be justified under any arguments so far proposed. Sanctions have however had some notable effects: they have reduced a once vibrant population to the status of international outcasts; they have killed thousands and caused malnutrition and disease in the bulk of the population; they have robbed Iraqis of the energy to protest nationally against Saddam and denied them access to processes of international protest.

These sanctions are maintained by the UN and cloaked therefore in the moral rectitude of that institution but their effects are clearly an abuse of UN-based human rights instruments and a source of shame to all Coalition member states who until this day persist in their implementation. ■

This is a lightly edited study by Maggie Grey who is a teaching fellow in International Relations at Bond University, Queensland, Australia.

...drastic reduction of food intake; exorbitant food prices; consumption of wild plants and other "famine foods"; large scale depletion of household assets; and even the emergence of open conflicts between family members ... over the allocation of food were already present among a majority of Iraqis

refugee camp."

When the FAO conducted two studies in July and November 1993 it seemed that that "vast refugee camp" had already materialized. The November FAO team reported finding "chronic hunger," "persistent deprivation" and "endemic undernutrition" and recommended that "some means ... be found to allow Iraq to purchase food for its people. The problem of food supply cannot be solved by merely distributing food aid". In July, the FAO's recommendations had been equally simple: "The only solution to the grave food supply problem is to work-out suitable arrangements which would allow Iraq to commercially import its entire food needs."

The most recent comprehensive report was published in November 1995, again by the FAO. It claimed that "about 70 percent of the total population is in precarious conditions." It further argued that "a very large proportion of the population in Iraq is in desperate need, and their conditions are worsening because of their deteriorating purchasing power and the continuous rise in food prices. The situation is so grave that it cannot be met through UN and NGO food assistance. The only sensible solution to enable Iraq, a potentially rich country, to import foods to meet its entire requirements." The report also "strongly encouraged" access to Iraq's frozen assets to "import the essential basic food stuffs to feed its population." Unfortunately, the UN's agencies have little persuasive power; the UN Security Council has consistently ignored these protests and recommendations.

From a perusal of the following UN-generated international instruments on human rights, it is clear that the UN's Security Council has abused all the specific entitlements of Iraqis relating to access to food and medical supplies.

Rights to food in a period of armed conflict: Initially, the sanctions were imposed within the context of an armed conflict. Although the practice of starving enemy combatants is a time-honoured and legitimate act of war, the starvation of civilians has been formally codified as illegitimate by the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention and by Protocol I in 1949 and Protocol II in 1977. All states involved in the Gulf crisis were party to the Geneva Conventions and therefore duty bound to prevent (rather than instigate) starvation. In brief, the Convention states that: Each High Contracting Party shall allow the free passage of all consignments of medical and hospital stores ... intended only for civilians of another High Contracting Party, even if the latter is its adversary. It shall likewise permit the free passage of all consignments of essential foodstuffs, clothing and tonics intended for children under fifteen, expect-

Middle East Beat  
by Khairi Jaber

## Social planning

AT THE peril of attracting flack from the liberal schools of thought, one is forced to bring out an important idea that lost vogue in intellectual circles, both locally and abroad. It is witnessing the nihilistic tendencies gaining the better of the Jordanian people.

One does not need to lecture moralism, nor to indulge in recriminations and justifications, but to propose a remedy that may have a lasting effect on the future resource development in our country.

Despite the fact that many may draw the wrong idea about social planning due to its historical association with totalitarianism, economic imperatives dictate otherwise. It necessitates dealing with limited resources, low standards of living, and urbanization. The issue is not to compile indicators, but to maximize the use of limited resources to fit national priorities, with due course to the immense social consequences.

In the process of economic development, man power and labor intensive policies must gain precedence. In the medium term, this may effect urbanization, and the expansion of our cities. Social planning must raise the living standard through deliberate government action that influences economic activity and physical environment.

For the proposed planners, certain communities in the country's length and breadth can be targeted, the criterion being the socio-economic poverty indicators. The process is simple as one can easily start identifying the committee's geographic location, size of the area, and density of population and with emphasis on the family structure in terms of sex, age and dependents.

Then the community is linked to other communities, city, markets, or other cities. The existing public services are taken into consideration, as the length of existence of the community will determine the degree of sovereignty within the community.

All the above however, will be dependent on factors affecting the provisions of social planning, such as financial resources that are available for implementation, existence of an original development plan, and political will. The advantage of this proposition is in the fact that it is based on collective responsibility and cooperation.

The ministries will have to be working with planning government agencies, who in turn must cooperate with planning consultants, and finally, all will be supporting the active participation of the members of the targeted communities who will be the beneficiaries of this planning.

To ensure success, and avoid confusion in planning, an inter-disciplinary approach is most essential so that all types of disciplines involved could heighten the awareness of each side's capabilities. At the planning phase, the social planner must ensure that the social features of the community are enhanced positively and suggestions are made according to the community's needs. At the implementation phase, the project must be continuously monitored with flexibility and responsiveness and hurdles and problems must be dealt with promptly. Finally, the project's impact after implementation must be evaluated as the planner's timely intervention can be crucial for success. In this formula, one wishes to emphasize the important points, of a comprehensive approach towards planning, in order to solve other problems, and the collective responsibility of all of us in bearing the fruits of our cooperation.

At this point, and without dreaming of suggesting the waste of resources, it would be most appropriate to re-train our planners, and more importantly to stop thinking of them as marginal analysts but rather as decision makers. ■



## Business scene

Revenues of the National Portfolio Securities Co. over the first half of this year, were about JD 200,000. Its profits were JD 36.8 thousand, however, they fell by JD 1.25 million as the index of securities portfolio dropped in 1996. The company suffered from losses at JD 1.2 million in the first half of this year.

Sales by the Jordan Rockwool Industries over the first half of this year were JD 544.1 thousand, an increase of 19.5%, compared with sales over the same period in 1995. But there are losses of 51.2 thousand. The operational ratio to sales was 22% compared to 17% of the same period in 1995.

The Universal Chemical Industries Co., generated profits of JD 239.2 thousand over the first half of this year. This is a rise of 35% compared with the same period last year. Company sales reached JD 3.7 million, JD 3.1 for exports. The quantity of sold chemicals that are basic for painting and other industries were about 3203 tons. Rights of shareholders until the end of last June were JD 2.93 million.

Jordan's Cement Co., has recorded sales of JD 855.2 thousand over the first half of this year. It generated profits estimated at JD 61.2 thousand.

The sales of Dar Al Dawa Development and Investment Co., reached JD 9 million during the first half of the year. It made profits estimated at JD 1.4 million. Rights of its shareholders by the end of last June were JD 20.3 million.

The Arab Potash Co., disclosed that revenues from sales during the first half of this year reached JD 53.4 million, an increase of 10.3% compared with figures of the same period last year. Arab Potash sold about 736.1 thousand tons of Potash at a profit of JD 16.8 million. Rights of its shareholders until last June were JD 201.8 million. The company was established in 1958 at a paid-up capital of JD 19.6 million. Contributions of Arab and foreign investors in its capital represent 41.6%.

The Jordan Dairy Products Co., recorded sales worth JD 2.8 million during the first half of this year. Its profits reached JD 184.3 thousand.

### Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 21 AUGUST 1996

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US \$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.0920	1.0975
DM	0.4752	0.4776
¥	0.5859	0.5888
FRF	0.1390	0.1397
YEN (100)	0.6553	0.6586
DEU	0.4237	0.4258
ITT (100)	0.0466	0.0468

# Bank mergers likely to induce financial stability in Jordan



Mario

AMMAN (Star)—In a step to boost the performance of the financial sector in Jordan, some banks are trying to merge. This is due to last year's recommendations by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) that banks should raise their capital to JD 20 million by the end of next year.

The first merger in the history of banking in Jordan is being adopted by the Business Bank and the National Bank. Earlier mergers were restricted to re-structuring of small financial corporations and converting them into investment banks. But this experiment failed.

The boards of the two banks are presently following up merger procedures in coordination with the CBJ and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

The deputy governor of the Central Bank, Mr. Michael Mario, described this as a positive step and expected further mergers among Jordanian banks in the near future.

The director of the National Bank, Mr. Abdul Rahman Toqan expected the new "Jordan National Bank" to start its

services and operations by the beginning of next year.

The merger will enable the new bank to expand its activities and strengthen its role internationally, Mr. Toqan added.

The assets of the five major banks in Jordan represent 70 percent of total assets of the banking system in the Kingdom, the remainder is supplied by smaller banks.

Total assets of the banking

sector reached JD 8.430 billion by the end of 1995.

The Central Bank argues that the banking sector in Jordan is overcrowded and that there are too many banks compared to the requirements of the local market.

Thus, the Central Bank encourages mergers among financial institutions in order to remove harmful competition and to give the banks more chances to expand regionally, Mr. Mario explained.

Mergers will mean greater financial stability and the ability to compete on the regional and international levels.

"Mergers will strengthen the banks and make them more competent," Mr. Mario concluded.

The chairman of the Business Bank, Dr. Rajai Al Moasher said that the new Bank will have 61 branches, 50 of which are in Jordan, five outside the country and six in the West Bank. The bank has branches also in Lebanon and Cyprus. The merger will enable it to provide better and

more varied financial services to clients both locally and internationally," Al Moasher added.

With total assets of JD 589 million, the new bank will be ranked fourth among Jordan's 21 banks. It will be preceded only by the Arab Bank, Housing Bank and the Islamic Bank.

Total rights of shareholders at the two banks were JD 51 million in 1995 and its paid-up capital is JD 22 million. Their deposits were JD 462.4 million, their credit facilities were JD 303 million and their net profits in 1995 were about JD 5.47 million.

## Investment projects register a vast increase

DUE TO implementation of the new Investment Encouragement Law, total investments during the first seven months reached JD 266 million. Foreign contributions in these investments were JD 51 million.

Total projects benefiting from the law were 190 projects among which were 153 for the industrial sector, 23 for hotels, seven projects for agriculture, six projects for hospitals and one project for marine transport and railways. The volume of investments over last year was JD 276 million.

The available statistics do not include other tourism projects to be executed on the eastern coast of the Dead Sea. These projects are estimated to cost JD 120 million. The figures also exclude projects of large hotels in Amman and others related to mining and energy in the south of the Kingdom.

## A touristic, commercial complex in east Amman

AMMAN (Star)—Al Tayibat for Touristic and Real Estate Investments Co., a newly established private concern, with a capital of JD 2.5 million, has recently won a tender to re-operate the old vegetable market in Wihdat. This project covers 29 dunums and has more than 300 shops dealing in trading and in traditional handicrafts. It has also a mosque, post office, a clinic, sanitary utilities and a 45-bedroom hotel to provide services for tourists. It has even a wide area for picnics.

The chairman of the company and the supervisor of the project, Mr. Moayad Al Dabbas, said this huge project will be completed at the beginning of next year at an estimated cost of JD 3.5 million.

Situated in Wihdat, the most important area in east Amman, this project "Al Tayibat village" will be a commercial district that provides services to the 800,000 people of that area.

This complex is accredited by the Ministry of Tourism as a touristic project. Arab and foreign tourists are expected to visit this site either for shopping or for entertainment.

The administration of the "village" and the Amman Greater Municipality are offering facilities and licences required for those who like to invest in the project.

## Balance of payments thrives due to invisible exports

AMMAN (Star)—Latest figures of the Central Bank note that Jordan achieved a surplus in its balance of payment estimated at JD 33.2 million over the first quarter of this year.

An external finance of JD 101.8 million has been provided to cover for the deficit in the current account which was JD 43.7 million and also covered the deficit in the balance of the capital movement which was JD 24.9 million.

External trade, particularly imports, still form a burden on the balance of payment and absorbs a big chunk of Jordan's reserves. Presently, the deficit in the trade balance

reached JD 459.7 million.

However, officials feel that there is a room for optimism as invisible exports (such as tourism, banking, insurance) recorded a surplus at JD 322.7 million. This has covered JD 70.2 deficit in the trade balance.

The latest five years have witnessed many political developments that had a negative effect on Jordan's economy. However, invisible exports are given more importance since they support the balance of payment through the revenues they bring in.

Jordanians working outside the country provided remittances estimated at more than JD 88.5 million in 1995 and JD 29.2 million in the first quarter of this year.

Remittances of non-Jordanian workers in Jordan reached JD 19.9 million. Thus, Jordan's net revenue of workers' remittances was JD 252.1 million which is considered an important resource of foreign currency. They form about 67 percent of the surplus in the balance of payments.

Jordan depends mainly on revenues of its employees abroad, particularly after the Gulf states had opened their doors for Jordanian skills.

Available figures indicate

that about 10,000 Jordanians have been already offered jobs in these states.

For the first time, some countries such as Malaysia, has offered 300 jobs to Jordanian engineers. This number is expected to reach more than 2000 engineers in addition to doctors, nurses and teachers in the near future.

Revenues of the increasing number of Jordanians who are working abroad will inevitably support the balance of payment, and the Kingdoms reserves of foreign currency. This will provide stability in the value of the Jordanian dinar and lead to improvement in the economic and social status of people in this country.

If these revenues are exploited in the right way in the field of productive investment and infrastructure, it will have positive results on the standard of living.

Foreign investment in Jordan also has a role in flourishing the situation as it helps to develop the industrial and technical sectors that provide the market with high quality product. This will consequently lead to an increase in the volume of national exports outside and a rise in foreign currency reserves.

## Stock trading on the AFM is still perplexed

AMMAN (Star)—Despite the positive factors that ought to lead to better trading on the AFM, the market continues to be in a state of "perplexity," recording only marginal earnings in few sectors. Last week's analysis pointed to the boost in Jordanian-Saudi cooperation and the approval of the oil-for-food formula that is expected to promote Jordanian exports to Iraq.

The atmosphere of optimism soon started to fade after reaching the 140 points psychological barrier last week. Amidst mixed dealings, total trading was in 87 companies, 25 recorded improvement while 45 registered a decline.

The trading volume went down by JD 3.3 million to reach JD 3 million compared with JD 6.3 million in the previous week. A marginal improvement on the share value of the Arab Bank led to a rise in the stock index from 139.84 points to 140.20 points. The share of this Bank represents 35 percent of share prices. However, Arab Bank stocks suffered from speculation, its price fluctuated between JD 222.5 to JD 218.5 dinars, and closed at 220.5 dinars.

The banking sector comes first as it hit the JD 1.30 million, followed by the industrial sector at JD 0.44 million.

The week's "Golden Group" includes the shares that went up by more than 10 percent. They are Al Kawthar Co., National Commercial Centres, Plastic Industries Co. and the Medical Supplies Co.

Transactions made in Arab Bank stocks were 34 percent of total dealings on the organized and the parallel markets (most of this is in the form of remittances).

The company recording the lowest stock value was the International Metal Industries Co., as its share fell by 8.2 percent.

Due to the latest disturbances in Karak and other areas in the south, dealings at the beginning of this week started with a drop from 140.20 points to 139.28 points.

Investors were anxious about reactions about the protest that arose because of bread price hike.

Until the middle of this week, the volume of traded shares was 445,000 valued at JD 503.2 thousand through 667 transactions.

Trading in shares of 66 companies, the figures show a rise in share prices of nine companies, a fall in shares of 41 companies while stock prices of 16 companies were stable. As a result the general index dropped by 0.3 percent to close at 138.86 points.

## Aqaba real estate market unstable but prospects for port look good

AMMAN (Star)—Dealers at the real estate market in Aqaba said that the signing of the peace treaty with Israel has led to a progress in the expansion of buildings in Aqaba. More than 800 construction licences were offered since 1994 until 1995, the dealers added.

Despite the last earthquakes that hit the governorate, the real estate market is improving particularly, in touristic utilities such as hotels.

Some investors have sold their lands to the Aqaba Regional Authority in order to invest them in touristic projects. Others, fearing from earthquakes, sold their buildings and properties and preferred to buy land in Amman. This led to a fall in the prices of lands, but the prices of construction materials are still high. This has created instability in the real estate market in Aqaba, dealers said.

On another point, the Aqaba port has witnessed a noticeable increase in commercial activity during the first half of this year, as the total volume of delivery at the port reached 6.5 million tons.

The chairman of the Public Ports Corp., Mr. Mohammad Al Dalabeh expected more activity because of the latest reduction in fees on cargo load and discharge operations at the harbor that was approved by the cabinet recently. Over the first half of this year, 228 vessels arrived at Aqaba in addition to 20,000 trucks.

Officials at the port received 72,800 containers compared with 60,500 containers in the first half of 1995.

Although an optimistic view, the recent cuts in fees are expected to attract many sea liners to shift from other harbors to Aqaba.

Delivery fees were cut by 20 percent, fees on load and discharge were cut by 25 percent, on vegetables and fruit by 42 percent and 25 percent on refrigerated foodstuff.

## Holiday Autos sees Middle East important for tourism

HOLIDAY AUTOS, the world's largest leisure car rental broker, has now completed the appointment of their GSA's across the region. The importance of the Middle East to the world's tourism market has long been recognized by Holiday Autos and it was essential to ensure that the appointed GSA's met Holiday Autos' high standards of quality and customer care.

Eight Middle Eastern countries, covering 12 separate offices have been added to Holiday Autos' growing list of international representatives. The eight countries which are now part of the network are Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Dubai, Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

The response to these appointments is already encouraging. "Although these GSA's were only appointed a month or so ago our reservations department is already busy with bookings which bodes well for the future of our business in this important region," says Mick Shires, managing director of Holiday Autos International.

## ABC Bahrain records highest profits

AMMAN (Star)—ABC INVESTMENT & Services Co. (E.C.) ("ABC E.C."), the wholly owned investment banking subsidiary of the Arab Banking Corporation generated record profits of \$6.498 million in the first six months of this year. This is an 81 percent increase over the net earnings of \$3.598 million during the same period in 1995.

A number of factors contributed to the company's strong profit performance for the half year. ABC Investment benefited from opportunities to obtain attractive yields on investment grade securities through using interest rate and currency swaps. Strong results in property trading activities were a further factor in the first half's successful outcome. Islamic banking activities continued to be a significant source of earnings, contributing 35 percent of ABC E.C.'s over-

all profit.

ABC EC has positioned itself to take advantage of anticipated new issue activity as Gulf capital markets continue to expand as well as to provide investment opportunities for regional investors seeking international portfolios.

ABC EC is a member of the ABC Group of companies, the parent of which is Arab Banking Corporation (BSC). The principal operating companies in the ABC Group, in addition to ABC EC are Banco Atlantico in Spain; ABC International Bank in the United Kingdom; International Bank of Asia in Hong Kong; Arab Banking Corporation-Dubai & Co. GmbH in Germany; ABC Banque Internationale de Monaco in Monaco and Arab Banking Corporation (Jordan) in Jordan.

## Cairo economic conference seen as a further step for business women

By Joanne Nix

WASHINGTON—Egypt "has really shown itself to be an economic performer." Since January the Egyptian government has taken "huge steps" economically and this November at the Cairo Economic Summit, women will "dialogue, network, really roll up their sleeves and help each other," an economic expert predicted recently in Washington.

Speaking via satellite on a USA International "Worldnet" television program, Judith Barnett, senior advisor to the Under Secretary at the International Trade Administration, told businesswomen in Jordan, Oman and Egypt that following the successful economic summit last year in Amman, Middle Eastern businesswomen and their American counterparts need to "begin to change the face of the Summit programs" because the annual gatherings of business people are "the most important thing we do in terms of commerce in the Middle East each year."

Barnett, who has implemented a series of programs for the Under Secretary ranging from commercial projects in support of the Middle East peace process to technology projects in California, recently returned from a five-day fact-finding trip to the Middle East to prepare for the upcoming Cairo summit, scheduled for 12 November.

"The important thing to know ...," she told a questioner who is interested in marketing her products in the United States, "is the US is a tough market. It's 250 million consumers and it's tough for any business. The most important thing you can do is to find a

strategic partner, and ... work through the National Federation of Women Business Owners or BPW, the Business and Professional Women's Association."

Barnett said that last year's summit, which was held in Amman, provided an opportunity for 1,200 companies to meet and exchange information. "They're not all large companies," she pointed out. "I think people are beginning to realize that small- and medium-sized companies are the fabric of trade and commerce throughout the world."

This year, Barnett expects at least 150 American companies to participate.

Barnett called for a special workshop or seminar to be part of the Cairo Summit which will allow women to dialogue and network. "I think not only formally, but informally, we really have ... much to give each other."

In addition, she urged women to be more aggressive in their participation. "Find yourself a role and a place out there ... And I say this to the women in Cairo: It's very critical to get women on the panels and in the workshops as presenters," Barnett advised.

"There is actually a Career Women's Trade Forum in the Middle East," Barnett reported. "It is small ... It's a regional project. And it's going to begin to look at health and all sorts of important things that are integral to women in business, and I think that we will begin to hear more about that, as the Summit approaches."

One of the key trends in American business today is the explosive growth of women-owned businesses. According to Worldnet host Jim Burrell, there are nearly eight million

women-owned businesses in the United States producing \$2.3 trillion annually in sales annually, an increase of 45 percent since 1990.

Barnett said that because of the explosion of small and medium sized business in the United States run by women, "what we have in this country ... is the Small Business Administration's Women-Owned Business Office" that has targeted women for training ever since the administration of President Carter (1977-1981).

She also reported that two weeks ago, a commission sponsored by Vice President Al Gore and Egyptian President Mubarak targeted the training of middle-management women for their next stage of their work.

According to Barnett, there is also an association "that has just organized under the new Economic Summit program ... the Middle East-Mediterranean Tourism and Travel Association (MEMTTA)," which, she predicted, "will become very important, because not only will it allow people to develop their tourism sector, but cross-regionally to develop that area."

Joining Ms Barnett on the Worldnet program was Toni Ford, president and chief executive officer of Telspan International, a company she founded in 1985.

Located in Landover, Maryland, Telspan International is a technology applications company that provides services in the areas of electronic audio-visual information system design and multimedia network system design, among other technology services.

Ford advised the women that the U.S. Agency for International Development

(USAID), through a number of its training programs, provides developing countries assistance and training. In this country, there are organizations as well as foundations specifically devoted to the area of women in tourism, specifically to provide for networking and access to information.

"I think that there is no faster nor more valuable way than the use of technology to incorporate and network women around the world," Ford suggested. "We have to make certain that we are familiar with, comfortable with, and not intimidated by the applications of technology, including the Internet."

Ford went on to mention organizations in the U.S. with statistics and information on women-owned businesses and the availability of software and sites on the Internet which could support efforts by women entrepreneurs.

Ford stressed, "There needs to be follow-up. If we're going to have women seriously taken in business, we must be serious about being women in business."

She also advised the women: "Don't give up. You're tenacious. You do have a plan. You keep going. But you believe in yourself and you talk to those people who reinforce you and those that don't, you don't worry about them."

Ford concluded: "I think tenacity is the one ability that you need. I think that the education is clearly important, but not all successful people have been educated people. I think a network is without peer. You must have a network."

USIA

## MARKET WATCH 17-20 August

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<p>↑ Kawthar Investment 4.88</p> <p>↑ Jordan Pipe Industry 1.13</p> <p>↑ Jordan Bank 0.98</p> <p>↓ Arab Financial Investor 5.26</p> <p>↓ International Trade 4.89</p> <p>↓ Jordan Electric Power 4.38</p>	<p>↑ Al-Amal Trade Center 6.00</p> <p>↑ Middle East Complex 1.50</p> <p>↑ Jordan Trade Facilities 3.17</p> <p>↓ Commercial Industry 4.76</p> <p>↓ Livestock &amp; Poultry 4.00</p> <p>↓ Philadelphia Bank 3.57</p>	<p>↑ Kawthar Investment 3.10</p> <p>↑ Jordan Electric Power 0.64</p> <p>↑ Jordan Bank 0.66</p> <p>↓ Central General Trade 5.08</p> <p>↓ National Plastic 3.57</p> <p>↓ Jordan Trade Facilities 3.08</p>	<p>↑ Kawthar Investment 5.26</p> <p>↑ Arab Pharm. Center 4.04</p> <p>↑ Intermediate Petro-Chemicals 2.61</p> <p>↓ Arab Financial Invest. 3.08</p> <p>↓ Universal Chemical Industry 3.70</p> <p>↓ El-Zay Ready Wear Manu. 2.88</p>
General Price Pointer 139.280	138.860	138.630	139.080
Trade Volume 503706	503213	434275	601714
Stock Volume 412708	445002	256425	303893
Highest Traded Stocks			
↑ Arab Bank 83.400	↑ Jordan Electric Power 83.144	↑ Arab Bank 92.190	↑ Arab Bank 132.140

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646949



# Palestine Post

## Palestinian human rights activist to be tried by PNA

Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHR) has confirmed that Mohammed Dahman will be brought to trial at the Palestinian State Security Court, according to Mr Dahman's colleague, Khalida Jarrar, Executive Director of Adameer-Jerusalem.

Mr Dahman, Executive Director of Adameer-Gaza, was arrested during the night of 11 August, for releasing a statement claiming that PNA detainee Naher Dahlan died as a result of his interrogation at the hands of PNA intelligence services. The PNA charged Dahman with fabricating the story. Ms Jarrar added that while the PNA had allowed Dahman to hire a lawyer for his defense, already that lawyer had been denied access to his client on at least one occasion.

The arrest and detention of human rights activists continues to be an increasingly alarming trend under PNA rule. Moreover, the use of the State Security Court, an extra-judicial body that operates at night and without any regard for the minimal principles of due process, is, in PHR's opinion, an unacceptable abuse of internationally guaranteed rights.

## Donor negligence may cause a Palestinian catastrophe

Palestinian Minister of Finance Mohammad Zuhdi Al Nashashibi accused the donor countries of renegading on their commitments to help Palestinians achieve economic stability.

Talking on Israeli Radio, Al Nashashibi said that the donors, particularly the United States, the European Union and Japan have not yet provided the Palestine National Authority with the \$2.5 million as was previously agreed upon. This amount has to be handed to the PNA before the end of 1997.

"Such amount is urgently needed to avoid an economic catastrophe, and we have to pay for the police and employees to ensure the continuation of public services," Al Nashashibi added.

The PNA is accused of increasing its expenses instead of financing projects to improve the infrastructure.

"The closure of the West Bank and Gaza since last February led to a deterioration in the Palestinian economy. The rate of unemployment in the PNA territories represent more than a 25 percent of the workforce," Al Nashashibi said.

## A Cement factory near Jenin

A delegation from the Palestinian Cement Company is holding discussions with Jordanian banks about the possibility of financing the building of a cement factory near Jenin. The company aims to raise its capital from \$10 million to \$30 million to be able to obtain bank guarantees.

The chairman of the company, Mohammad Arafat said that the factory, which will be operational in 18 months time, will have a productive capacity of 2000 tons per day. Its output will cover 29 percent of the needs of the Palestinian market. The company is expected to make an annual profit of \$22 million, Mohammad Arafat added.

The local construction sector consumes 2.4 million tons of cement annually. The plant is expected to create 500 job opportunities and raise the standard of the industrial sector.

## An industrial area to be built in Gaza

Building an industrial area in Gaza is one of the objectives of the PNA in order to improve the industrial sector and develop the national economy.

An agreement related to the project was signed between the Minister of Industry, Bashir Al Barghouti, and the Director of PADICO (Palestine Development and Investment Company), Hatim Al Halawani in the presence of Maher Al Masri, minister of commerce and industry.

Mr Al Barghouti expressed his readiness to provide facilities and opportunities to invest in this project, which is seen as a cornerstone to develop Palestinian industry.

The Gaza industrial project will be built on an area of 500 dunams with total costs estimated at \$50 million. After completion, it is expected to generate \$400 million in export revenues.

It is expected to create about 50,000 job opportunities, the World Bank stated. Another two industrial areas in Jenin and Nablus are also to be built.



Al Nashashibi

# Drive for Israeli settlements leads to beduin eviction from their land

By John Daniszewski  
LA Times-Washington Post  
News Service

MAALE ADUMIM. Occupied West Bank—A shoeless girl with tiny legs and a dirty face trips on the hard gravel, cries and races off to find comfort in the helter-skelter arrangement of corrugated tin shacks, bleating animals and threadbare tents.

This Bedouin Arab child has an ever-shrinking refuge. All around her encampment, bulldozers, dump trucks and excavators relentlessly chew through the hillside to expand a booming model city for Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank. The dust from their construction mats the hair of the children and settles on the surface of the sweet tea that is offered to every visitor.

The builders are erecting townhouses of imposing white stone up and down the hills on the outskirts of Jerusalem—edifices whose perfect straight lines and neat flower beds have put off-limits the grazing land on which the girl's Jahalin tribe relied.

These Bedouins—descendants of the wandering desert tribes of the Arab peninsula—feel they have become an inconvenient obstacle to the

Israeli government's objective of a continuous band of Jewish settlement encircling greater Jerusalem. In about two weeks, the last 50 Jahalin families are to be pushed off the land they say they have inhabited for more than four decades, since before it was seized by Israel.

Authorities want the Bedouins' patches to make room for \$200,000 townhouses, and they have ordered the tribe to move to a rock hillside about a mile away, adjacent to the huge garbage landfill that serves Jerusalem and West Bank cities.

Human rights activists have rallied to the tribe's defense, although they express little hope of forestalling the eviction. They cast the battle as an important test of the new Israeli government's willingness to treat its most powerless neighbors humanely.

"They call it the most democratic country in the Middle East, but between Jews and Bedouins I see no democracy at all," said tribesman Mohammad Hirsh. "All we ask is that we be left to live as human beings, with our own way of life."

The Jahalin arrived in the desert hills between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea in the early

1950s from the Negev Desert to the south. Intimidation and attacks by soldiers during the hot-blooded early years of the Israeli state, they say, are what drove them across the border into what was then Jordan.

They settled on the brown mounds east of Jerusalem as tenants of Palestinian landowners, bartering milk, cheese and meat from their large goat herds for the use of the land.

Their situation changed radically after the 1967 Middle East War. Israel seized East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and the Israeli military became the civil authority. The Israelis declared empty land separating Arab villages and farms to be government land, military areas or "nature reserves" unless owners could prove otherwise.

According to Lynda Brayer, a lawyer for the Jahalin, establishing ownership was almost impossible because the Israelis did not recognize the land titles, maps, tax records and testimony of neighbors that constituted proof under the Jordanians, and before them the British and Turks. Israel required, Brayer said, that the land had been plowed for 10 consecutive years—laughable in the arid grazing

land used by the Jahalin.

Tribe members were considered squatters and trespassers in the tents where they were born.

The first removal of the Jahalin came in 1982, when construction work began on Maale Adumim. At that time about 50 families were evicted. In the years since, Maale Adumim has grown to more than 25,000 residents, with shops, restaurants, schools, parks, swimming pools and cultural centers, making it the largest Israeli community in the West Bank.

Israelis no longer think of Maale Adumim as a "settlement"; it is legally a city—practically a model community of apartments and townhouses—within a 25-minute commute of Jerusalem.

Benny Kashriel, the mayor of Maale Adumim, shrugged off a question about the city having been built on occupied land claimed by Palestinians. "Here there are no 'green lines,'" he declared, referring to the frontier between the West Bank and Israel's pre-1967 border. "Not on our maps, and not in our minds."

In fact, Maale Adumim was a "strategic" settlement for successive Israeli govern-

ments. The existence of such a large Jewish population just east of the city sandwiches mostly Arab East Jerusalem between Israelis, cementing the Israeli hold on the city.

In 1993, authorities told the remaining Jahalin that they would have to leave. Since then, tribe members have been engaged in legal battles to stay—contending that they have a right to remain on the land, or to be allowed to return to the northern Negev, or to be awarded another suitable area to inhabit.

On 28 May, the High Court turned down their last appeal and ordered the land vacated by 28 August. The 400 or so Bedouins remaining (others have quietly moved off) plan a show of resistance, but they admit that they will be no match for the bulldozers and police.

"They are building houses and making room for immigrants from Russia and Ethiopia. Give us a place as well—just a little village with water, electricity and permission to build our own homes," said Hirsh, 42, receiving visitors in a wood-and-corrugated-metal structure where a sword in brass scabbard hangs to remind him of his Bedouin

heritage. The alternate site offered by the government is a steep, rocky hillside overlooking the municipal dump.

Uncertainty over the tribe's fate is a particular source of anguish for elderly members.

Tears filled the eyes of 85-year-old Turfa Abu Ghaila when she recalled the semi-nomadic existence the tribe had in the Negev. "A nice life," she called it. "We could graze where we wanted, camp where we wanted. There were pastures, and we could come and go as we pleased ..."

"Now, here, someone comes to us almost every day and tells us we have to move on. 'Why didn't you move yet?'"

Kashriel, the mayor, said the Bedouins have no claim to his municipality's land. "They have never had a permanent camp here," he said. "They only started to settle down after Maale Adumim was established."

Brayer said arguments that the Bedouins arrived only after Maale Adumim are easily disproved. "I've got even statements from the schools. The adults ... went to school here 30 years ago," she said.

# Benazir Bhutto beleaguered by corruption charges

By Kenneth J. Cooper and Kamran Khan

KARACHI, Pakistan—In her successful 1993 comeback campaign, Benazir Bhutto made corruption her biggest issue, repeatedly accusing Nawaz Sharif of financial wrongdoing as Pakistan's prime minister.

Bhutto continued the anti-corruption crusade after retaking the prime minister's chair.

"I will not compromise on any member of the ruling coalition," Bhutto said in a television interview. "And if this leads to grumbling, I am prepared to go to the people again (for a new election), but I will not compromise on political corruption."

Now Bhutto, halfway through her five-year term, finds herself on the receiving end of corruption charges by Sharif and other leaders of a freshly united political opposition. They have accused Bhutto to and her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, of collecting bribes and kickbacks on government contracts and siphoning the proceeds abroad—charges the couple forcefully denies.

Critics trumpet the fact that Bhutto has named to her Cabinet several ministers accused of financial crimes. They allege her government has also engaged in a pattern of favoring political and personal associates in lucrative business deals.

In one example cited by the opposition, while she was out of power from 1990 to 1993, Bhutto repeatedly declared the Saifullah family to be a "plunderer" of the nation's wealth.

Upon her return to the prime minister's office, however, she appointed the family patriarch, Anwar Saifullah Khan, to her Cabinet. Then last month, her government exempted a cement company co-owned by the Saifullah family from \$400 million in excise taxes, disregarding the objections of the national tax collection agency.

The political opposition's charges of corruption in Bhutto's government have grown sharper since summer British *Sunday Express* newspaper reported that Bhutto and her husband had bought a \$3.9 million mansion in the English countryside near London.

Pakistan's national airline shipped seven pallets of antiques, carved furniture and other household items from Bhutto's private seaside residence in Karachi to London. Four pallets were delivered to Pakistan's embassy; the other three have remained unclaimed at Heathrow Airport since a Karachi-based opposition party disclosed copies of the shipping invoices in May.

Bhutto devoted an hour-long news conference in June to denying that she and Zardari had purchased the 335-acre estate in Surrey. The owner of the swank property, which has a private landing strip and indoor swimming pool, is listed as an offshore company registered in the Isle of Man, according to the *Sunday Express*.

In a newspaper column published a week ago, Bhutto dismissed the corruption charges as the political propaganda of her opponents.

"My adversaries continue to make totally unsubstantiated and wild charges of corruption against my party, my government and my family," she wrote. "It seems their manifesto is mudslinging, and the truth

is the first victim."

The controversy has contributed to Bhutto's growing political problems and the unpopularity of her coalition government. Business interests have sharply attacked a \$1 billion tax increase in Bhutto's latest budget. Meanwhile, however, the International Monetary Fund is pressing her to impose even greater fiscal austerity.

The allegations against Bhutto have come against a backdrop of Pakistan's international reputation for corrupt business practices. In early June, Transparency International, a Berlin-based international coalition of public figures and academics opposed to corruption, reported that business executives rated the country as the world's second most corrupt, after Nigeria.

Pakistan has a long tradition of official corruption, including bribes for favorable government contracts and generous concessions on taxes.

"There is essentially a mentality that the public sector belongs to the people who are running it, and (that) they deserve to make a lot of money," a Western economist said. A perception that corruption has increased in the last decade, the economist suggested, may exist because the restoration of democracy brought a need to fund political campaigns.

"Corruption is something people have gotten to feel is predictable," said Tariq Banuri, who directs a think tank in Islamabad, Pakistan's capital. "If you can't pay off somebody, then that creates uncertainty. You put in an honest (bureaucrat), and that creates

uncertainty."

Privately, affluent Pakistanis allege that almost every large government contract must win approval from Bhutto's husband, Zardari, whose unofficial powers have earned him the nickname *sahib*—a respectful title once reserved for British colonial rulers and nowadays used to mean "boss."

With no formal role in the government, he nonetheless has presided over meetings attended by Cabinet ministers, top bureaucrats, presidents of state-run banks—and, on at least one occasion, the governor of the central bank of Pakistan.

Two weeks ago, Bhutto elevated her husband, a member of parliament, to her Cabinet and created a special portfolio for him as investments minister. She has not publicly explained his appointment, which many analysts portray as an apparent move to give Zardari an official role.

The change in Zardari's role did not satisfy Bhutto's critics, however. "This is another cruel joke," said Mushaid Hussain, spokesman for the Pakistan Muslim League, the main opposition party.

Farhatullah Babar, Bhutto's spokesman, did not respond to repeated telephone calls seeking comment for this article. Said a Western diplomat: "I'm not sure there's more corruption under this government than the previous government. This government's problem is the appearance of impropriety, gross impropriety."



Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto

# More Arab Americans enter US political arena

Moreover, a record 69 Arab Americans are running for federal, state and local positions, a number that includes one new candidate for the 100-seat Senate, and four Arab American congressmen running for reelection and three new candidates for the 435-member House of Representatives. Ten are running for state senator or representative and 14 for judgeships in several states.

By George S. Hishmeh

WASHINGTON—Arab Americans, who came to the US about 100 years ago, have come of age, politically that is.

In the past decade they have projected themselves with fervor on the American political scene. More Arab Americans are now running for office and becoming involved in electoral politics than at any time in the past.

What has been more rewarding is that they are now being taken more seriously by the leadership of the two main political parties in the country and the ongoing campaigns of both President Bill Clinton and Bob Dole, the Republican presidential candidate.

Over 100 Arab American activists are participating as delegates or party officials at the quadrennial national major political party conventions: the Republicans' now underway in San Diego, California, and the Democrats' scheduled later this month in Chicago. For the first time, they will also be hosting two social events at the conventions, complete with Arabic music, food and dance, honoring party leaders at which prominent Arab Americans and office-holders will be the featured

the Washington-based Arab American Institute (AAI), which has been the fore-runner of national and local political involvement since its founding 11 years ago.

Moreover, a record 69 Arab Americans are running for federal, state and local positions, a number that includes one new candidate for the 100-seat Senate, and four Arab American congressmen running for reelection and three new candidates for the 435-member House of Representatives. Ten are running for state senator or representative and 14 for judgeships in several states.

Richard Leyoub, currently Attorney General of Louisiana, is running for a Senate seat. The new Congressional candidates include Democrats Chris John of Louisiana and Clem Balanoff of Illinois, and Republican John Sununu, Jr., of New Hampshire, son of former President George Bush's first chief of staff.

Another indication of the upward mobility of the Arab American community, according to Dr Zogby, is "the fact that people in both parties are looking at us as a constituent group to court; that is because of work we have been doing and work we can do."

policy? Are we able to change policy? No. But are we able to weigh in on it and discuss it, and have them talk to us about it. Yes, we are and that is something never existed before."

In an interview, Dr Zogby estimates that there are at least 550,000 Arab-American registered voters, based upon a voter database compiled for his institute. The AAI, formed in 1985 for the sole purpose of encouraging Arab American participation in electoral politics and promoting access to the political parties, is hoping to register another 50,000 by November 5, the US national election day.

Arab-American baptism in the national political campaigns began when several were elected as delegates of Jesse Jackson, the charismatic black leader who ran unsuccessfully for his party's nomination in 1988.

In order for Arab Americans to become delegates to the Democratic Party convention, explained Dr Zogby, "Arab Americans had to be elected and slated by the Clinton campaign and thus the large number of those elected—40—reflects the respect given to the Arab American community by the Clinton White House campaign."

Arab-American ethnic committee.

Arab American Democrats won party recognition only in 1992 when the Clinton campaign organization sanctioned the first Arab American Democratic support committee.

The Arab Americans for Dole Committee will be chaired by George Salem, a Palestinian American attorney who served as an official in the Reagan and Bush campaigns and was also the highest ranking Arab American in the Reagan Administration—the US Solicitor for Labor. Salem is also a co-founder of the Arab American Institute.

The Arab Americans for Clinton-Gore Committee is being chaired by the Democratic Arab American members of Congress and several prominent Arab American community leaders including five trustees of the Democratic party and the president of a major labor union, the United Auto Workers—the first Arab American to hold such a post.

"The presence of five trustees," according to Dr Zogby, "is itself a significant breakthrough for Arab Americans, since trustees are those who have contributed in excess of \$100,000 to the national party."

He continued, "This year those Arab

American Clinton-Gore steering committee and coordinating the work of the Arab American Democrats. This group includes 40 elected officials and 28 Democratic party officials.

In the opinion of Dr Zogby Arab Americans stand to play a "noteworthy role" in the upcoming elections since the two parties are targeting the key Midwestern states, where more than 40 percent of Arab Americans reside. Arab Americans are estimated to number anywhere between 2.5 and three million nationwide.

"For example," Dr Zogby said, "a group of 100,000 voters in Michigan can have a significant impact in this election. This is one reason why the ethnic vote is being paid attention to this year. We are part of the ethnic coalition."

In a joint statement to appear in an upcoming AAI newsletter, Salem and Zogby say that Arab Americans today are part of the American success story. "The Arab community," they write, "is an example of the contributions an ethnic group can make when it has access to the economic and political life of this country."

Arab Americans, they continue, are seeking "to make their mark in national politics" in the following manner:

Middle East (and) want to provide a bridge of understanding between the American and Arab peoples ... (and) forge new relationships between them based on mutual respect, concern for human rights and self-determination, and the establishment of normalized, productive ties in all areas—political, economic, and cultural."

AAI highlights the "unprecedented access" provided by President Clinton to Arab Americans "at every level of political participation." It cites his naming of Donna Shalala, the first-ever Cabinet member of Arab descent, as "opening a new era in Arab American participation in national politics."

It also recalled the many doors that the late Commerce Secretary Ron Brown opened to Arab American Democrats as well as Vice President Al Gore's initiative in creating in 1993 the "Builders for Peace" program which undertook to promote Arab American and American Jewish private sector investment in the West Bank and Gaza.

"People say I am just being an optimist describing the cup is half full," said Dr Zogby, "and I responded when I was told that this not an issue of the cup being half full or the cup being half empty. The fact



# Argentine TV reflects the freedom of young democracy

By Sebastian Rotella  
LA Times-Washington Post  
News Service

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—If one measure of democracy is the freedom to make fun of the government, a quick round of channel surfing suggests that democracy is thriving in Argentina.

On one channel, a popular program gleefully replays the (alleged) lies and verbal pitfalls of public figures such as the union boss who declared arrogantly, "For the country to make progress, what we should do is stop stealing for a couple of years."

On another show, a satirical newscast dispatches brash "reporters" to ambush mayoral candidates, interrogate police chiefs and fluster the education minister by demanding that she name the capital of Sri Lanka.

And a popular TV character is Rivarola, the king of parasitic public servants, a sleazy bureaucrat who lives to make money without working. His motto: "This country has enough for everybody."

The styles of the programs differ, and the content ranges from brilliant to silly. But they share an irreverent, satirical edge. They are products of a recent trend that blends comedy, politics and journalism in an exuberant confrontation with the powers that be.

During Argentina's military dictatorship, which ended 13 years ago, stern colonels ran the TV stations. And the elite in many Latin American countries still use direct and indirect censorship to control the airwaves.

But Argentina has experienced its longest period of uninterrupted democracy in six decades. Television has become an instructive, occasionally chaotic mirror of a society in which freedom of speech is exercised with relish.

"It reflects the consolidation of democracy," said Miguel Rodriguez Arias, producer of the show "The Legs of the Lie."

"The more years that pass, the less fear ... people have to express themselves—even though the politicians still fear television the most."

The obsession with political humor, analysts say, results partly from the free-wheeling political style that has flourished since President Carlos Menem was elected in 1989.

Even as a provincial governor, when he cultivated the charismatic, sideburned image of a rural strongman, Menem enjoyed mixing with the Buenos Aires jet set. Earlier in his term as president, he made the rounds of gossip talk shows and serious interview programs alike, singing tangos, playing soccer with the national

team and answering personal questions with amiable candor.

Although the president's profile has lowered with the years, his initial anything-goes accessibility set a new tone, according to TV critic Pablo Sirven, author of two books on the media. Politicians have developed a frank, informal attitude, he said.

"The formality of politics has faded," Sirven said. "The reaction of television has been, 'If the politicians don't take themselves seriously, why should we take them seriously?'"

Argentines have an obsession with the hustler or con artist. The slang abounds with terms such as "trucho," which means fake or scam, and "chanta," which means swindler. As the democracy has matured, the public has come to see its elected representatives in this context, Rodriguez said.

"After the dictatorship fell in 1983, being a congressman was respectable," Rodriguez said. "Today, a congressman is a chanta. The image has deteriorated."

The combination of non-stop corruption scandals and an unlettered media generates plenty of material, said actor Miguel Del Sol.

"Politicians do incredible things, things you couldn't make up—they hand it to you on a silver platter," said Del Sol, a chameleon-like comic who stars on a show that dubs Argentina "Trucholandia" (Scamland). Del Sol portrays the strutting chiseler Rivarola, a grandiose maestro of small-time corruption who is popular with viewers because "at the office or among their friends, everyone knows a Rivarola."

While "Trucholandia" is a conventional comedy, other programs experiment with form. The most innovative and sophisticated is "The Legs of the Lie." The title refers to the Spanish saying, "Lies have short legs."

Producer Rodriguez, 50, is a cerebral man with a black goatee, a psychologist who worked in advertising for 25 years. Motivated by an intellectual interest in political discourse, Rodriguez began compiling video clips in the late 1980s. He built the biggest television archive in Argentina—an act with subversive implications in a society whose dictators tried to erase the painful memories of their brutality.

"The military had a very old policy of not respecting memory," Rodriguez said. "There was a lack of documents, of television archives."

Poring over his videos, Rodriguez discovered that the televised words of political leaders were the best satirical material of all. Politicians contradicted themselves. They made Freudian slips. They talked frankly about skulduggery. They did outrageous things: A former defense minister allowed himself to be interviewed on a round bed by a scantily clad talk-show hostess.

"This must be the only country in the world where politicians go on popular television shows to be amusing," Rodriguez said. "And this must be the only country where politicians admit to corruption...."

"Corruption has been made frivolous. It is so generalized. The attitude becomes that if everyone is corrupt, no one is corrupt."

Rodriguez spliced his nuggets into zany, documentary-style videos without narration, which sold wildly in video stores. Last year, he launched the widely watched weekly program that includes commentary by Lalo Mir, a beak-like disc jockey who rolls tape and then dissects the hypocrisy on display with pugnacious delight.

Despite the show's accusatory premise, Rodriguez said he has not encountered censorship, threats or lawsuits. Once, a government official complained that Rodriguez was making Argentina look bad to the outside world.

"And I said, 'No, you in the government are the ones who are making us look bad,'" Rodriguez recalled. "I am doing this to consolidate the democracy—so that this becomes a more serious nation. So that politicians do their jobs and do them seriously."

Rodriguez defines his work as a "serious program with humor." But he and other artists are great admirers of "Caiga Quien Caiga" (No Matter Who Falls), which strives not to be serious.

"CQC," as it is known, is an hour-long mock newscast anchored by three youthful hipsters. The award-winning show adopts an uproarious, post-MTV format dominated by fast talk, jump cuts and rock music. Creator and star Mario Pergolini previously produced a "Candid Camera"—type show that ambushed everyday people. Now he has turned his sights on the famous and powerful.

Pergolini and his cohorts maraud through news events—a ribbon cutting, a ceremony of the once-feared federal police, a meeting of Latin American presidents—and put the newsmakers on the spot with jocular, sarcastic interviews. After Education Minister Susana Decibe failed to identify the capital of Sri Lanka or solve a geometric equation, the shaggy-haired "reporter" walked away muttering to the camera, "Clearly, the minister is completely uninformed."

In its inspired moments, "CQC" is fearless and funny. Other programs mimic its ambush approach.

Critic Sirven said that one of the form's limitations is that Argentine public figures, rather than reacting angrily or pompously, are playing along with the gag. Some print journalists complain that officials take advantage of the disruptions to dodge tough questions at news conferences. Although the new batch of programs may adopt the trappings of journalism, in the final analysis most of them remain entertainment, Sirven said. And television comedies are unlikely to dig up and denounce wrongdoing in high places, he said.

"I think this genre will be short-lived, because the politicians have learned how to respond," Sirven said. "Often, it is not a harsh criticism. It is more like childish mischief, and the politicians play along."

Still, it seems clear that both politics and television have learned to take themselves less seriously. "That is healthy," Sirven said. "Irreverence is healthy."



## Learning for a Green Jordan

AMMAN (Star)—KAMAL NUEIMAT learned all about methods of breeding trees in the Laboratory in Escherode, Germany. Today he returns to Amman to try his hand at "greening Jordan," a personal priority of His Majesty King Hussein.



Nueimat

Mr. Nueimat was selected by the Jordanian Seed Center, where he is employed as an engineer, to spend three weeks in the research laboratories of the State Research Center for Forestry in Escherode, Lower Saxony. His visit was arranged and made possible by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), project of technical cooperation. This specific GTZ-project in Jordan is involved in Watershed Management for the purpose of erosion control in the dry and arid wadis which run from the highlands to the Dead Sea.

His primary goal was to learn as much as possible, since Jordan is in need of the technical know-how for widening and strengthening its sparse greenbelt. Currently, only one percent of Jordan is forested since conditions for extensive afforestation are less favorable. Mr. Nueimat indicated that the arid mountain and desert regions combined with a hot climate have always been a hindrance to large scale afforestation. Therefore, priority is being given to strengthening the greenbelt to hinder the spread of erosion.

In the arid wadis, which run from the highlands to the Dead Sea, rare but sudden heavy downpours cause torrents of water which surge down these barren slopes washing away the valuable top soil. This process can be hindered and rain water given the chance to seep into the ground by constructing terraces and walls as well as planting these areas with trees.

In addition to protection against erosion, the country is also interested in establishing a source of raw material. Both concerns are supported by the government and according to Mr. Nueimat, have become a personal priority of King Hussein.

The Jordan National Seed Center supplies 13 tree nurseries with seeds from which between seven and nine million forest tree seedlings are raised each year.

These young saplings are delivered free of charge to private and state forestry organizations as well as farmers for the purpose of afforestation.

A research center with a laboratory equipped for the study of plant tissue is being planned for the near future. In this laboratory, important and in some cases rare varieties of trees such as the wild pistachio, several Mediterranean strains of oak and the Syrian wild pear will be cultivated in test tubes as their seeds are difficult to obtain. It is therefore understandable that Nueimat has shown special interest in the work being done and keen in absorbing the knowledge in the laboratory of Escherode.

# Canada's plan to beat excess plutonium into plowshares

By Howard Schneider  
LA Times-Washington Post  
News Service

TORONTO—After opting out of the nuclear-arms race more than 30 years ago, Canada now wants to help mop up after it by recycling tons of plutonium from surplus US and Russian nuclear bombs as fuel for civilian reactors.

In proposals to the US Energy Department and in preliminary talks with the Russians, officials with the government-owned utility Ontario Hydro say their reactors on the shores of Lake Huron could be adapted to burn a type of hybrid fuel that includes a small percentage of plutonium.

Use of the former bomb material in a mixed-oxide nuclear fuel is one of the options the US Energy Department is considering as it decides how to dispose of perhaps 50 tons of plutonium. Russia also has tons of the highly toxic material, removed from weapons under arms-control treaties with the United States.

Canadian officials say their initial studies indicate the reac-



Nuclear conversion into fuel may affect Canada's beautiful terrain, some experts argue.

tors at the Bruce Generating Station in northern Ontario could be modified to burn the fuel within a few years—more quickly and easily than US reactors that are based on a different design and technology.

And as a matter of policy, they say, it would enhance Canada's long-standing renunciation of nuclear weapons by converting the tools of the Cold War into electricity and rendering the plutonium worthless for making weapons.

"For us, the bottom line is a need to reduce the stockpile of weapons-grade plutonium," said Ariel Delouya, speaking for Canada's Foreign Affairs Department. "There is value in examining proposals that would provide a safe outlet for

disposing of this enormous quantity of plutonium that both the Americans and the Russians have built up."

The US Energy Department has been studying for several years what to do with the plutonium pits removed from defunct weapons and is doing detailed environmental, economic and security analyses of several options, according to Bert Stevenson, the department's deputy director for environmental compliance. None, he said, has emerged as clearly superior.

Canada's is the only proposal from another country, he said. A decision is expected by the end of the year.

The cost and safety of the idea are matters of dispute. Environmentalists say converting the plutonium to a fuel will prove to be more expensive and less safe than another major option—mixing the plutonium with a ceramic or glass-like material and burying it in metal canisters.

Burial, they argue, would eliminate the need to invest in a fuel fabrication plant here or more troubling, to ship the material to an existing plant in Europe and then back to Canada's reactors. In addition, they oppose using plutonium for commercial purposes, for fear it would encourage other nations to do so and thus add to the world's supply.

"It would be a political nightmare," said Tom Clements, who is following the issue for Greenpeace. He raised the specter of military convoys protecting shipments of plutonium as they cross the border to Canada—an image that might not be well received in a nation quick to assert its sovereignty when it comes to the United States.

"I think they are going to have a hard sell," he said.

But burial also faces obstacles, such as ensuring the technology is safe, and locating a site in the United States where it is politically feasible to store the canisters.

The Canadians, meanwhile, are arguing to both Russia and the United States that letting Canada use the plutonium would eliminate it as a weapons risk. When plutonium is mixed with uranium and used to generate electricity, the remaining waste is not of weapons-grade.

## Jewell tried by no-holds-barred press

By Howard Kurt  
LA Times-Washington Post  
News Service

ONE OF these days, the FBI may put out a statement saying there is no evidence tying Richard Jewell to last month's bombing at the Olympics. That would set off a great hue and cry about the wrong-headed investigation and how it ruined the Atlanta security guard's life.

But what about the media, which splashed Jewell's name on the front pages, camped out on his lawn and dug up embarrassing details from his past—all without the faintest idea of whether he had a role in the bombing? What about the willingness of journalists to link someone to a horrible crime based on unnamed law-enforcement sources?

Even some reporters now believe the press deserves a gold medal in the rush to judgment. "How innocent can you ever be again once your name has been flashed across the land as a would-be mad bomber?" writes Mike Littwin in the *Baltimore Sun*.

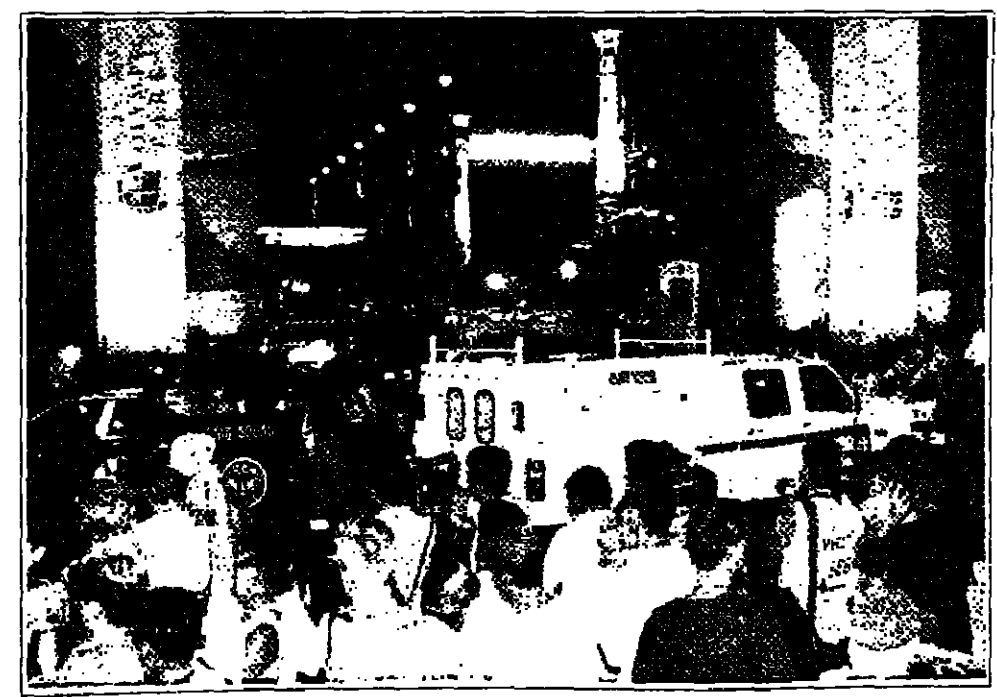
"Jewell was fed to the world's media wolves," says CBS's Harry Smith.

"It's remarkable how little press attention has focused on law enforcement's role in flouting Jewell's name," writes James Ledbetter in the *Village Voice*.

The story line was right out of Hollywood: a man who helped evacuate the bomb site—certified as a hero by an interview with Katie Couric—suddenly transformed into a potential villain of monstrous proportions. "SAINT OR SAVAGE?" asked the *New York Post* with its usual subtlety. Reporters chatted up experts about the "hero complex" that prompts people to create tragedies so they can pose as rescuers.

And yet few journalists asked the hard questions about the lack of physical evidence or the unwillingness of any federal official to make an on-the-record case against Jewell. In the hyper-competitive world of news gathering, such details are often lost as everyone chases the latest hot scoop.

This pack mentality makes it all too easy for each news organization to blame its behavior on others. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* put Jewell in play by rushing out an extra edition 30 July, with a 378-word story saying he "is the focus of the federal investigation" as a "police wannabe" who seeks to become a hero. CNN quickly followed suit. Major newspapers—including *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Baltimore Sun* and *USA Today*—checked with their sources and trumpeted the allegations on the front page. A notable exception was *The New York Times*, which ran a story on an inside page about the



A scene from the Atlanta bombing

media frenzy.

The problem is that law-enforcement officials often use the media as a way of putting pressure on a potential suspect, or simply to make it appear they are on top of a high-profile case. But police sources are sometimes wrong, as they were in 1989 in accusing a black Boston thief of murdering a white suburbanite named

Carol Stuart, who turned out to have been murdered by her husband.

In this instance, the bombing case became the "Jewell case," complete with swarming camera crews and hourly updates, despite Jewell's protestations of innocence. If he is exonerated, his reputation will be in tatters, courtesy of the no-holds-barred press.

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## U-Save Auto Rental expands globally

VINCENT HOWLEY, President of U-Save Auto Rental of America, Inc. announced the appointment of The Jordan Investment and General Consulting Company, Ltd (JIGC) as its exclusive franchise development agent for the Middle East.

According to the Development Agent Agreement, JIGC will recruit, train and support U-Save franchisees to service Jordan, Israel, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait and Egypt.

JIGC is part of the Abu Khader Group. Formed in 1949, the Abu Khader Group operates such diverse businesses as automotive spare parts and



accessories, car and truck dealership, chemical products and real estate among other things. ■

## Portraying life and people

By Munther Hamdan  
Star Staff Writer

Getting deep into and drawing an image of a character is quite a complex process. But with an insight and a perceptive eye, it becomes possible to give an encompassing portrayal of influential characters. This was exactly what Mr. Ali Sa'adeh of *Ad Dustour* daily did in his latest book *Portrait*. It is a compilation of a series of profiles of resounding Jordanian, Arab and international characters which were published regularly in the newspaper.

The title of the book was chosen carefully by the writer. Creating a portrait, be it a painting or in written form, requires skill to enable the writer to depict a comprehensive view about the character portrayed. The writer must also be aware of the subtle details of the person's life and how they relate to each other. Thus, Sa'adeh must have been in perpetual anxiety to know everything about his characters, the way they think, and how they deal with their problems.

In his portrait, Sa'adeh portrays different kinds of people rather than focus on one type, that of the political for example. He presents different characters that belong to different schools of thought and careers and have different interests.

You can read about leaders, sportsman, deputies, cinema directors and so on.

It can be argued that the writer confused himself by tackling the lives of all those different people. But a careful reading of the book shows how all these characteristics are indivisible and have meeting points. "It is an adventure to go on describing a character because you would not know when to stop or where. Thus, the writer might in some cases be forced to pay courtesy or give self-judgements while the main ideas are lost," Sa'adeh wrote.

The first impression you get while browsing through the book is that it was written by several people. When reading Sa'adeh's portraits about politicians involved in international affairs, you are reading for a political analyst and when reading about an artist or a sportsman, you feel that Sa'adeh is an expert in these things as well. To avoid subjectivity, Sa'adeh employs material he obtained by ongoing research. This gives his work much credibility.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part is devoted to portraying national characters and touch upon local issues. Among those portrayed



is the former Prime Minister Taher Al Masri, the Mayor of Amman Dr Mamdouh Al Abbadi, Abd Al Majeed Shoman of the Arab bank and many others.

The second part consists of Arab portraits such as the Egyptian cinema director Youssef Shabane, the Sudanese thinker Hassan Al Turabi, the Palestinian revolutionary, George Habash and others.

Portraits of international characters can be found in the third part of the book. Some of

those include the Cuban President Fidel Castro, the former American Foreign Minister Henry Kissinger, and the South African leader Nelson Mandela. The last part includes different views about sport, teachers, TV and etc.

Sa'adeh's book is significant because it uncovers hidden aspects of many influential characters. The audacity of the writer and his comprehensive style of writing makes his book a valuable one. ■

## Tiffani's Trueste, perfume introduced on the market

AMMAN (Star)—Trueste by Tiffani is the newest perfume which was recently introduced to the market by the Gifts Centre that is represented by Ibrahim and Khalid Abu Shakra Trading Co.

On the occasion, the company held a reception at the Marriott Hotel. The reception was attended by Mr Muhammad Suleiman, the general manager of the company and a number of perfume dealers.

Mr Suleiman briefed the audience on the special characteristics of the new perfume and the company's continuous efforts to introduce quality to the Jordanian market. He also gave a glimpse about the history of the mother company Tiffani which produced the perfume. A video film was shown explaining how Tiffani started producing and selling perfumes and gifts.

Trueste by Tiffani is a refreshing expression of youthful verve, with a delightful fruity floral. With its vivacious top notes of black currant, apricot, peach and Mirabelle plum, Trueste is warm at the heart with rich floral notes of Indian tuberose, Italian orris, Turkish rose, and ylang-ylang. Rare jasmine from India and Iranian galbanum is mixed with an exotic but refined aura, hinting at a diverse, metropolitan character. Trueste's underlying notes of Indian sandalwood, Virginia cedarwood, oakmoss from Yugoslavia and vanilla from Reunion Island, create a sensual, sophisticated base.

This subtle but captivating blend of fine ingredients echoes the vitality of the woman who wears it, self-assured, but enjoying the discovery of her own truest moments, the people, the places, the achievements that have the most meaning, especially the joy and energy of real love. ■



## The departure of a poet and an art critic

By Star Staff Writer

The innovative Iraqi poet and critic Baland Al Haidary, who belongs to the generation of poets who established different, and sometimes contradictory schools of poetry and literature during the fifties, passed away. Many poets in Al Haidary's time blossomed to enrich the Arab cultural movement and to keep it up with modern styles of prose.

Seeking to establish an identity for Arab culture, Al Haidary, along with other Arab poets, worked together and formed artistic groups. They issued literary magazines and cultural centers especially in Europe. Later on, Al Haidary became the chief editor of *Al Funun Al Arabiyah* magazine which was arguably the most important Arabic magazine to be issued in Europe in the 1980s. The magazine had also an English edition titled *Gilgamesh*.

Not only had Al Haidary been concerned about the poetry movement in the Arab world but he was also involved in art. He had written several articles about Islamic art and took upon himself to present

the Arab artists to the world through the magazines and newspapers that he was writing for. His assessments of the Arab plastic artists appeared primarily in *Al Majalah* magazine which was issued in London. He wrote several books such as *Zaman li kul Al Azmanah* (Time for all Times), and articles on art. In the introduction to the book he says that art is timeless except for the external shape which does not affect the essence of the work of art.

In his *Time for all Times*, Al Haidary studies creativity, the aesthetic aspects of art and the old civilization. He reviewed the Al Rafidin culture, the old Egyptian art and the Islamic art.

He believes that Islamic art was influenced by other artistic



Al Haidary

styles while seeking to create its distinct identity. However, the conflict between the acquisition of other styles and the creation of a particular style was not studied carefully by Arab historians, according to Al Haidary. He thinks that historians limited their study about the Islamic art to the degree of influence and creativity.

"But the issue was not studied in line with the psychological features of Muslims." He also studied the art in the Indian continent, Japan and China. He has a famous study on the Japanese and how they "paint" poems.

In addition to his infatuation with the orient, Al Haidary wrote about European, American and African art. He was critical of the well-known art schools such as impressionism, modernism, surrealism, cubism etc. As to African art, he studied the manufacturing of masks, and simple sculptures.

Al Haidary took an active part in the Arab and international art movement. He attended many conferences and presented numerous working papers on the relationship between Islamic art and literature and between Arab architecture and Arab poetry.

With his death, the fifties generation lost one of its most influential characters. Along with Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, Abd Al Wahhab Al Bayyati, Abd Al Khalek Al Rikabi, Al Haidary contributed much to the euphoric cultural scene of the fifties which we lack these days. ■

## Al Azraq festival starts 26 August



AMMAN (Star)—Al Azraq festival testifies to the significant position occupied by the city of Oases on the map of culture. The people of Al Azraq are gathering to hold a festive season that is marked by different cultural activities. The festival, which starts on 26 August is organized by the Ministry of Culture and Al Azraq Cultural Forum.

Different activities can be seen in the four-day festival. These range from musical concerts and singing to poetry readings and lectures. The band of the Armed Forces is to play in the opening ceremony and the poets Salman Al Shomari and Suleiman Uwais will be reading some of their poems. Other folklore groups which are scheduled to perform are the Al Azraq, Al Hanouneh, Al Tafleeh and Al Azraq youth group. A lecture titled "Water reality in Jordan and Al Azraq Oasis in particular," will be held Tuesday and followed by Nabeel Al Mashini's play *Akh Ya Disky* (Oh, My Back). On the third day of the festival there will be a poetry recital by Habib Al Zyoudi and Jerjes Samawi. This is followed by a musical concert played by Jordanian artists. On the closing ceremony, Zulaikha Abu Rishieh, will read some of her poems. The Lebanese singer Tony Hana, will give a concert afterwards.

During the festival, there will be a handicraft exhibition, plastic art, a book fair and special corner for the books of the late cinema critic Hassan Abu Ghaniemeh. ■

## Intermarkets Egypt three-time award winner

INTERMARKETS ADVERTISING Egypt, does it again clinching two golden awards in the Second Cairo Festival for Television and Radio 1995-1996. It won the Golden Award for Best Commercial for Gobur Food Products and Golden Award for Best Production for the Subeel Mineral Water.



Intermarkets has managed to maintain its position as an award winning agency after success in the First Cairo Festival in 1994-1995 with Golden Award for Best Public Service Commercial for a family planning campaign for the State Information Service. In the previous year, in a 1993 research conducted on the best TV commercial in Egypt, Intermarkets won the title of Best Commercial for Sunflower Seed Oil called Sila.

This success has positioned Intermarkets in the forefront among other advertising agencies in Egypt. Galal Zaki, president of Intermarkets Egypt, said that the key to the agency's success is the recruitment of creative and highly dynamic young individuals who are continually undergoing training in integrated marketing communications. ■

## Talented children gather in Zerqa

AMMAN (Star)—The Second Children Festival for Art and Culture, which started last Thursday, proved a great success so far. The festival, which is being held in the Zerqa Municipality Stadium, is about children and their creative aspirations.

The two-week festival displays different forms of activities that appeal to the children's senses and encourage their talents. In the opening ceremony, more than a 200 children from all over the Kingdom attended the festival.

The event is organized by Al Zerqa group for folklore arts in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture.

The opening ceremony of the festival which was attended by Zerqa officials included a speech delivered by Dr Shukri Hassan, member of the festival's preparatory committee. He stressed that because children are the ones who will be responsible for building the prosperous future of Jordan,



they should receive the utmost support from all private and public sectors.

Several activities were held in the first day of the festival. The folklore group of the Chechenian Charitable Society performed a number of folklore dances then came the Zerqa folklore group which intro-

duced some national songs. Their ages ranged from six till 10 years old. This was followed by dancing performances for Al Dia' artistic children group.

There was laughter scenes as a colorful clown amused the children.

The cinema, part of the festival, proved very enjoyable for

the children. The two films *Brave Jano* and *Little Devil* were shown on the same day. A lot of children attended these films that will continue till the end of the festival.

The Open Microphone Contest gave the children the opportunity to perform songs after which they received prizes. There was also the cultural contest which is organized by Mr Al Hassan.

What is interesting about this event is that there are more children outside the festival's hall than inside. Despite the fact that the entry fee is only a quarter of a dinar, some said this was too expensive.

Today, Thursday, the festival holds a lecture on the "Advantages of Family Organization." The speaker will be Maha Sinaa of the Jordan Society for Family Organization and Protection.

However, more people are expected to attend the second week of the festival. More children's plays are being staged to reflect the creativity of children. ■

## THE FAR SIDE

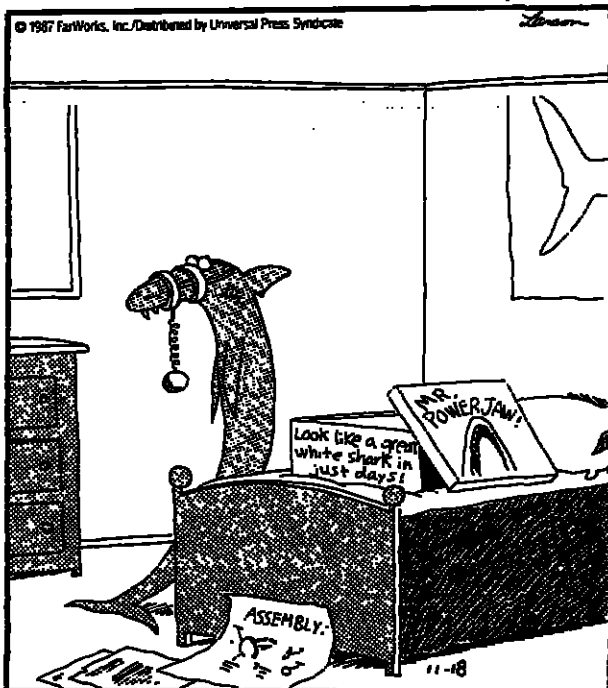
By GARY LARSON



Early archaeologists



"Hey! Now her whole head is out!... This is getting better every minute."



Products that prey on shark wimps



Inexplicably, Bob's porcupine goes flat.

## AGENDA

### Exhibitions

- An exhibition by Lina Hani, at the Housing Bank Complex Gallery, continues till 31 August
- Summer '96, at Darat al Funun, continues till 10 October.
- An abstract plastic art exhibition by Abeer Al Bawab, at The Royal Cultural Centre, ends today
- A Summer Souvenir by Jordan River Designs, at Adil Centre, Shmeisani,

continues till 25 August

### Theater

- Hayat Attieh reading and accompanying music by Mounir Bashir and dance by Ruba Attieh and Natasha Atalla, at Darat al Funun, Wednesday 28 August

### Films

- *Frantic*, at The American Centre, today at 5:00 pm.



AUGUST 1996

A special section offering  
fresh perspectives on  
global issues prepared for

The Star

# THE WORLD PAPER

PRINTED IN FIVE LANGUAGES  
ON FIVE CONTINENTS



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Retirement in the developing world is becoming an option

## A pot of gold at the end of the rainbow

By Roberto Salinas-León

REVOLUTION is sweeping Latin America in matters of social security reform. So says José Piñera, the main architect of the pension reform in Chile, perhaps the most cited case of success in social security privatization. As the US and the rest of the developed world continue to adhere to ineffective state-managed pension systems, alternatives fashioned in the spirit of the hugely successful Chilean reform are being tried in nations like Mexico, Peru, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia and others. For Piñera, this harbors happy news: "My bet is that almost all Latin countries will enter the 21st century with the competitive advantage of a private system of individual capitalization."

The rationale behind this drive is twofold. First, public "pay as you go" pension systems have institutionalized mass corruption and fund-mismanagement in virtually all Latin American countries that have experimented with the model, thereby fueling high fiscal deficits and rampant inefficiency. Second, countries are eager to avoid the dramatic crash that characterized Mexico's crisis and peso collapse. One of the principal lessons of the peso crisis is the need to sustain adequate levels of domestic savings—particularly for vulnerable economies in the emerging market world. A private system of social security is seen as an effective mechanism to stimulate domestic savings.

Chile is virtually the only country in Latin America that survived the outflow of "hard" capital that occurred in the wake of the peso collapse—the so-called "tequila effect." Its high domestic rate of saving, equivalent to 27 percent of GDP, is the outcome of a highly successful system of private social security.

This system, adopted 15 years ago, has yielded multiple benefits. For labor, it signified a vital source of economic stability. For Chile's government, it pro-

vided the opportunity to divest unprofitable concerns and eliminate wasteful public spending. To the financial system, it represented a reliable source of expansion via massive growth in money-market investment. All in all, some 95 percent of the labor force in Chile eventually opted for the private alternative.

The introduction of a private system of pensions, or the (partial) privatization of social security, has met with greater resistance in other Latin regions. In Peru, Argentina and Mexico, governments opted for mixed systems. However, publicly op-

erated systems rely on subsidies which gives them an unfair advantage over private alternatives.

In Mexico, the original aims and claims of pension reform generated strong political opposition. The final result maintained positive features of a more competition-oriented system, yet became shrouded in bureaucratic procedure and was left bereft of the crucial element of individual choice. This problem is endemic across Latin American countries trying to have it both ways, and which have failed to produce the spectacular results of Chile's innovative scheme.

Mexico recently approved legislation to implement a privately-based pension system in 1997. It is a landmark reform despite the modifications. In the long-run, the new system is expected to manage resources equivalent to a massive 45 percent of GDP.

A crucial goal of the Zedillo administration is to raise Mexico's savings rate to 25 percent of GDP by the year 2000. To achieve this, the government is trying to introduce private competition among the various institutions which handle the contributions made by workers to their retirement funds, medical programs and other social services. This initiative, however, has unleashed a torrent of hostile rhetoric from a public that has little idea of its structure, operation and goals.

This opposition has come from every corner of the political spectrum. It ignores the choice between public and private institutions. This new system will give workers a choice, one that 90 percent of Chilean workers have exercised in favor of private funds.

In all Latin American countries with pay-as-you-go systems, bureaucracies manage a huge collective fund for retire-

ment, medical services and housing. These pools of savings are, however, vulnerable to the demands of vested interests and the politically connected. Some of the money has gone to such dubious capital projects as baseball stadiums and soccer clubs, cutting into the returns that pay the contributing workers.

As a result of this corruption, these systems are viewed by workers as unreliable, offering them no exclusive claim to the money they contribute. Most Mexicans see their social security contributions as an obligatory payment to finance bureaucrats. It is this view that the architects of the Chilean model hoped to correct.

This will only work if the system is transparent, so that workers are confident their funds are verifiable and accessible. Without this confidence, the opposition of special interests, labor unions and bureaucrats will derail needed reforms. Initiatives to reform the pension

systems in Brazil, Peru, Bolivia and Argentina all failed to survive this onslaught.

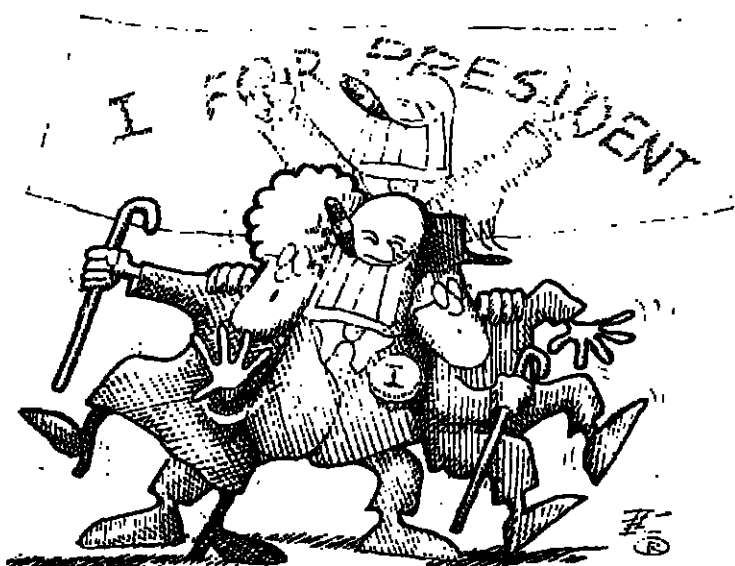
There is a limit to what pension reform can achieve. By itself, it cannot correct Latin America's culture of consuming rather than spending. That took Chile 15 years of reform and steady government. In other countries it may take longer. A stable currency, low inflation,

tax incentives to save and the availability of sound investments are all vital.

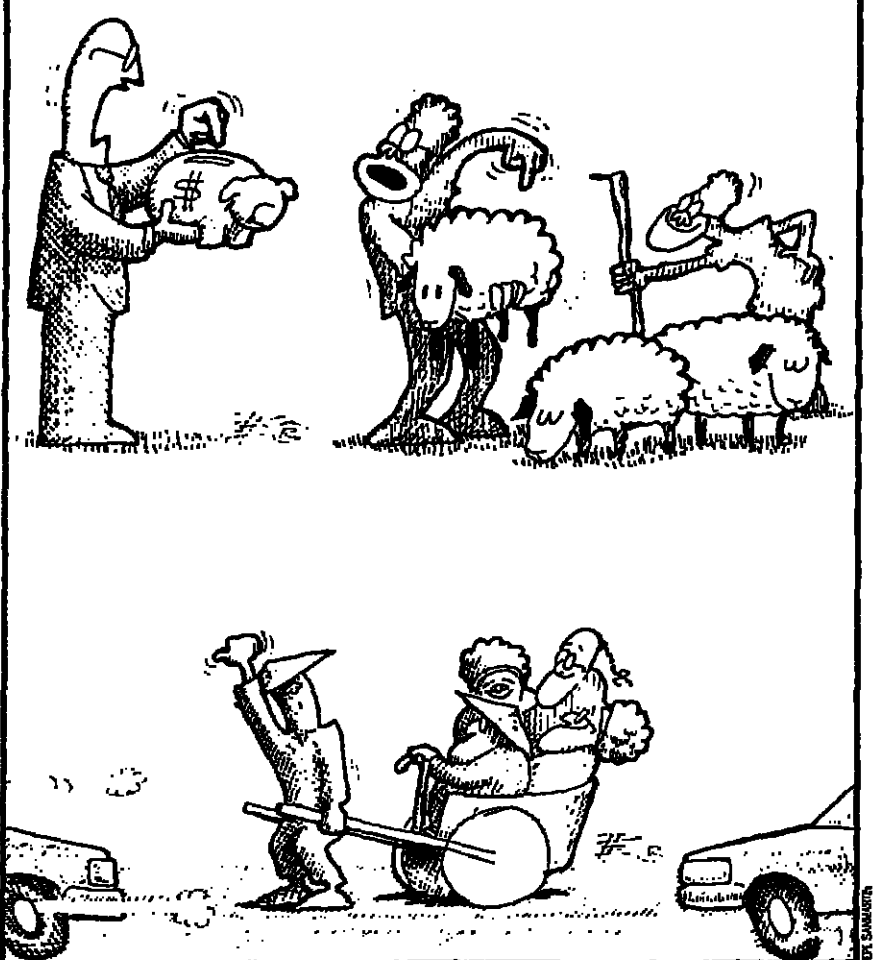
If pension reform is to work, perhaps the most important steps are bringing those who work in the informal economy into the new system and finding ways to finance benefits that are not fully funded. Without the latter, elderly workers may have little incentive to switch from a public to a private system. □

**Most Mexicans see their social security contributions as an obligatory payment to finance bureaucrats**

ROBERTO SALINAS-LEÓN IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR FREE ENTERPRISE RESEARCH (CISLE) IN MEXICO CITY.



Pension systems—and who pays for them—are becoming the battlegrounds over which generations in developed countries fight their economic battles. With younger populations and lower expectations, emerging economies still have time to do better



century will assume the so-called "4-2-1" structure; a young couple raising a single child while having four older people—their own fathers and mothers—to take care of or support. "It won't be difficult to imagine how formidable the task is for the couple," says a senior official at the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

"Moreover, life may become unbearable for those old people separated from their children who work away from home," observes Zhang Pu, director of the ministry's Rural Social Insurance Department. "As you know, free flow of labor is a prerequisite for developing a market-oriented economy."

According to the latest official statistics, about 74 percent of the 1.2 billion Chinese live in the countryside. Under the reform policy, peasants, after paying taxes, are allowed full freedom to go their own ways in production and employment.

In an effort to involve rural China in the shift to markets, and for the good of both the elderly and the younger generation there, the Ministry of Civil Affairs launched a pilot social insurance program in some villages in the eastern province of Shandong in 1991. The program persuades villagers between 18 and 60 to open individual accounts by depositing a fraction of their annual incomes for a social welfare fund to

China's dilemma

CHINA'S DILEMMA PAGE 2

More pensioners than pension money

## South Africa now faces a demographic time bomb

By Brendan Seery

TWO YEARS AFTER South Africa's first democratic election ended the Apartheid era, the African National Congress-led government realizes it is sitting on a pensions and social welfare time bomb.

Between 1990-1995, the numbers of people drawing old age and disability pensions rose by 54 percent, to 1.7 million, costing the country US\$1.8 billion annually. This is a comparatively small slice of the government's annual \$40 billion budget expenditure. What worries the Social Welfare and Population Development Ministry's political head, ANC Member of Parliament Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, is the fact that the numbers of pensioners could balloon.

The 1.7 million pension recipients are a small proportion of the country's current population of 40 million. Some predict the population could double, to 80 million by the year 2010. Proportionally, there will be more people eligible for pensions, as the numbers of older people increase and pensions are spread to the black population which was discriminated against during the Apartheid era.

Fraser-Moleketi's department is already moving quickly to remove the racial distinctions between pensioners which were a hallmark of the former system. Whites over the age of 65, for example, would draw pensions up to four times what their black counterparts received. Redressing of this imbalance would leave all qualified old age pensioners getting just under \$100 a month.

Economic analyst and commentator Tony Twine says that, ironically, "The government's pensions and social service burden will increase as its massive primary health care program starts to work." Twine says successful primary health care will extend the life expectancy of all South Africans, but dramatically so for the rural poor—who will then need to be supported in their old age.

Earlier this year, a government-appointed commission of inquiry into retirement provision—headed by retired financier Guy Smith—recognized the looming problem. It did note that the age-old African system of extended families and kin members would still provide a "social safety net" for many of the rural aged. In urban areas, however, the traditional fabric of African society is break-

ing down and the extended family is not fulfilling the role it does in rural areas. The greatly increased number of homeless people, especially the elderly, is evidence of this trend.

The inquiry commission secretary, Reg Munroe, who is also the employee benefits manager of Cape Town-based Old Mutual—the biggest life insurance group on the African continent—says the government should aim at drawing more people into private pension provision. This would alleviate the pressure on public funds.

For its part, the government has made a detailed study of the state pension schemes in Chile, with Fraser-Moleketi's predecessor, Abe Williams, saying last year that a Chilean-type national contributory pension scheme was the best solution for South Africa. The problem

with that proposal, according to Twine, is that "the people at the lower end who are supposed to be contributing to the scheme simply don't have the means to do so." Adds Twine, "You cannot expect someone from a rural village in KwaZulu-Natal, who struggles to feed his family from a small plot or has a meagre herd of goats or cattle, to put away money for his future."

Another area on which the government is working is the tightening up of screening procedures in the registration of those who qualify for a pension when they retire.

Currently, those applying must undergo a "means test," where they must demonstrate they have assets worth less than \$7,000. There have been a number of reports of reasonably affluent people hiding assets to claim the pension.

TIME BOMB PAGE 2

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Iron rice bowl rusts

## China's dilemma adds up to 4-2-1

By Wang Hui

LIAN XIGEN, now in his mid-30s, has been paying 100 yuan (about US\$12.2) a year in old-age insurance premium since 1992. For that, he will be entitled to a yearly pension of 1,800 yuan (US\$219) when he is 60.

"I want to rely on myself as far as possible," says Tian, a vegetable grower on the outskirts of Beijing. "The kids will be more than willing to support me and their mother, but life is becoming so busy and competitive and I don't know if they will be able to do so."

For thousands of years, elderly people in China's rural areas have been relying on their children for support. By tradition, elderly people live with their children and their children have the moral and legal responsibility to take care of and provide for them.

This tradition remained basically intact until the late 1980s, when China found that it was heading toward an aging society at the same time its population growth had slowed and the new market economy was triggering off a migration of rural labor into the cities.

Under the one-child per family policy, a typical Chinese family in the next

REPORTING FROM  
BEIJING

continues till 25 August  
Theater  
■ Hayat Attieh and accompanying music by Mounir Badi  
dance by Ruba Attieh at the  
Nataasha Alalla at the  
at Funun, Wednesday  
August  
Films  
■ Frantic at the Amn  
can Centre, today at 5  
pm.





Laughing all the way to the bank? Retirees in many emerging economies must rely on themselves

## TIME BOMB

Continued from page 1

The other aspect of the debate about retirement provision concerns South Africa's pension industry, which has assets of around \$115 billion, more than the country's annual Gross Domestic Product.

The government-appointed Katz Commission, which issued its report earlier this year, ruffled many feathers with its recommendations that incomes and assets of private pension and provident funds be taxed to provide revenue for the government's highly-touted, yet crucial, Reconstruction and Development program.

The government followed up the proposals with legislation, tabled in Parliament in early June, which provides for a tax to be levied at a rate of 17 percent on the gross interest income and net rental income of retirement funds in both the public and private sectors.

Meanwhile, even privately-funded retirees may pose a problem for the government.

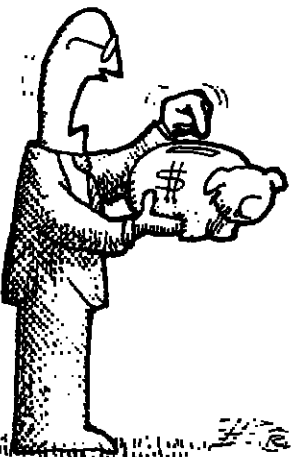
Niel Krige, executive deputy chairman of the Momentum Life group and who is a member of the industry's Life Offices' Association, is critical of the current inclination among South African retirees to take a large portion (or all) of their benefits as a lump sum on retirement. This, he says, leads some people to either spend the money or "invest unwisely." He warns that this could lead to increasing numbers of people, who may have been self-supporting in their retirement, again becoming a burden on the state.

He and others in the pension industry have been lobbying the government to implement rules which would compel people to take monthly pension payments as opposed to lump sum commutations. Critics of the industry which has, over the past 25 years shown returns which bettered inflation by 4.1 percent, believe the funds make bigger money out of people opting for the monthly payment option.

Finding the truth will prove difficult. The necessary transparency may be a while in coming for South Africa, which is only slowly moving out of the Apartheid era—a time when the government's near-paranoid sense of secrecy often trickled down to ordinary business.

Analysts are warning that ordinary South Africans, who now have the vote to determine their political future, are going to increasingly demand a say in their financial future. Those pension funds who don't recognize this could find themselves losing out. ☐

BRENDAN SEERY WRITES FOR THE BRITISH DAILY NEWSPAPER *The Independent* FROM ITS JOHANNESBURG BUREAU.



## Retirees wary of spendthrift government

## Sri Lankans keep their pensions in the family

By Harold Pieris

FOR MOST Sri Lankans, the best contribution to a secure retirement remains a birth in the family.

In spite of modern pension systems—both public and private—the traditional reliance on extended families is likely to endure for the foreseeable future. This attitude cuts across the numerous ethnic and religious groups that make up Sri Lanka's population of 18 million.

A common thread which runs through all ethnic and religious groups is the almost divine belief that children should look after their living parents and after death too. Sinhalese, Tamils, Moors, Buddhists, Hindus, Christians and Muslims all subscribe to this belief. This approach makes up for the lack or inadequacy of social security systems in the country, where there are no shortage of elderly—life expectancy between 1991-2035 is projected at 69.1 years for males and 74.2 years for females.

This belief in the extended family is symbolized on festive days or at weddings when children kiss the feet of their parents or elders. But it works both ways. Parents invest in their children to give them the best in education and life, knowing well it will be returned when they are old and in retirement. Even when they migrate permanently or for work, children make it a point to assist their parents and elders in cash and kind.

Overseas employment is currently Sri Lanka's biggest foreign exchange earner, bringing in over US\$600 million. The country's per capita GNP is \$652, and unemployment is estimated to be around 13.7 percent of the labor force. Around 150,000 Sri Lankans now travel abroad for employment each year, and currently over 500,000 Sri Lankans are working overseas. Be they housemaids, medical doctors, engineers or accountants, they send their money home for their families.

Even funerals of parents are held up until the children arrive from overseas. This is due to the strong beliefs about intergenerational responsibilities that are shared by all groups or segments of Sri Lankan society.

But the terms "social security" and "welfare" are not new in Sri Lanka. Since colonial times, Sri Lanka has had universal free education from kindergarten to university and free health services. The establishment of free education accounts for the country's very high literacy rates, though employment opportunities have not kept pace. Financial constraints restrict the State's free health services and many resort to paid private medical services.

There have been pension schemes since the British days for those in Gov-

ernment service, and after independence in 1948 the Employees Provident Funds and Employees Trust Funds provided some coverage for those privately employed.

But the Provident Fund and the Trust Fund schemes are inadequate for those retiring, and are confined to those living in urban areas.

The government is aware of this situation, and the National Workers' Charter, which will soon be written into Sri Lanka's labor statutes, requires the state to ensure retirees are covered by a social security program. It says employers will be encouraged to initiate medical insurance schemes and to grant special coverage to workers exposed to risks at their workplaces.

The government has also initiated provident fund schemes for farmers and fishermen, but these are at a very incipient stage.

Currently, the best option for those retiring from government service is the monthly pension scheme which grants a monthly pension calculated at 90 percent of the worker's salary at the time of retirement. This option is available to those who retire after 30 years of service. For those who retire having between 20 to 30 years of service the monthly pension is calculated at 80 percent of the last salary.

In the private sector, different companies and banks have pension and gratuity plans for their employees. But the basic scheme is the State Employees Provident Fund, to which the employer contributes 12 percent of a monthly salary and the employee 8 percent. Employees in the private sector are also entitled to a gratuity of one month's salary for every year of service, provided they have served the company for a minimum of 20 years. To the State Employees Trust Fund the private employer has to contribute monthly the equivalent of 3 percent of the employee's salary, which is collected and paid with interest on retirement.

But these schemes cover only those in urban areas. The bulk of Sri Lankans, nearly 70 percent of the population, are in the rural areas and remain uncovered by any plan.

The government's ability to increase pensions or initiate new programs is severely restricted by budgetary constraints. According to the latest estimates of expenditure and revenue for 1996, the government spends \$5.45 billion and has an income of \$3.358 billion.

The shortfall of \$2.092 billion is met from external sources. In addition, the government is currently financing an ethnic war with Tamil separatists that is costing \$700 million a year.

Thus, the state of the nation's finances sends a very clear message: all Sri Lankans have to depend largely—

## CHINA'S DILEMMA

Continued from page 1

provide for themselves when they are old. The annual premiums vary from person to person, depending on the income of each, from a few yuan to well over 100 yuan.

"Take for example a person who is 25 years old," Zhang says. "By depositing 35 yuan a year in his or her individual account, the person will be able to withdraw from it a yearly sum of 1,386 yuan when he or she is 60."

"For people at the age of 50, they will have 1,125 yuan a year for the rest of their lives starting from 60, if they deposit 480 yuan a year," the official says.

In a bad year, the premium payment may be delayed until a good year. In case of a premature death, the money already deposited by the insured in the individual account may be inherited by his or her legal heir.

"Peasants like the system for its low premiums and flexible terms," Zhang says. In less than two months, about 80,000 villagers joined the voluntary pro-

gram. Encouraged by the success in Shandong, the ministry began promoting the program nationwide. By the end of 1995, it had been instituted in more than 1,600 counties to cover more than 62 million rural residents.

Fan Baojun, vice-minister of civil affairs, predicts that by the year 2000, the program will cover approximately 120 million people, with an accumulated fund of 15 billion yuan.

Zhang Pu, however, describes this social insurance system as "rudimentary," something designed to supplement the traditional family support for the aged instead of substituting it. "Family support will continue to play a major role in providing for the elderly. After all, the countryside is still backward economically. It may take decades for a full-fledged social insurance system to become possible there."

"For that reason, the government will continue supporting the old practice of children taking care of their parents or grandparents," he adds.

In cities, however, a relatively advanced old-age pension system is being established.

Work began in 1984 to change the old practice of state- and collectively-owned enterprises taking care of their employees for life.

The practice, widely known as the "iron rice bowl," was part of the planned economy under which enterprises played the care-for-all role with regard to their employees. "Old-age pensions were secure even if enterprises were losing money," Zhang says. "The government would step in and provide the money needed for their retirees."

With the introduction of market practices, these days are gone. A vast majority of the state-owned enterprises are now responsible for their own losses and profits. And consequently, many have found it difficult to provide for their retirees who are growing in numbers with each passing year.

The new system the government has tried to institute nationwide since 1984 aims to provide retirees with basic social insurance. It obliges state-owned enterprises in a given city to put 16 percent of

their total payroll into a social insurance account managed by the Social Insurance Administration under the Ministry of Labor. The administration, through its 3,955 offices across the nation, will send retirees their pensions through banks or enterprises.

In 1992, China expanded the new old-age pension system by introducing the so-called "mandatory individual pension accounts." The new measure requires wage earners to deposit 2-5 percent of their wages into their individual pension accounts as a supplement to the basic social insurance.

The government also encourages enterprises to set up their own pension funds for their employees and calls on workers to save for their old age. It hopes that these would serve as supplements to the basic social insurance, so that when workers retire, they will not see a plunge in their income.

By 1995, the number of employees and retirees who have joined the old-age social insurance program had increased to 87 million and 22 million, respectively, accounting for 77 percent of all the employees and 98 percent of all the retirees.

According to Wang Jianlun, vice-minister of labor, by the end of the century, the system of basic insurance for the aged should have been expanded in such a way as to include those township-run enterprises—enterprises operated by rural collectives.

"Privately-owned enterprises and self-employed people too will get involved eventually," he says. ☐

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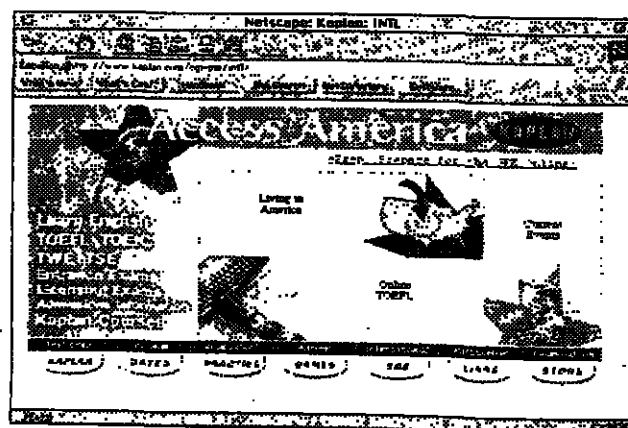
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# Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star



## Benjamin Netanyahu pose ses conditions

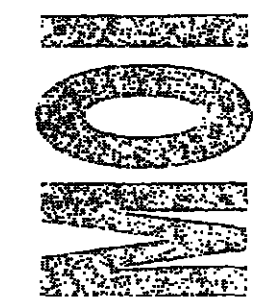
«Il n'y aura pas de progrès dans les négociations avec les Palestiniens, y compris sur la question d'Hébron, tant qu'ils n'auront pas fermé leurs bureaux à Jérusalem». La déclaration faite mardi par le Premier ministre israélien (notre photo) pose clairement les conditions du dialogue avec l'Autorité nationale palestinienne.

Benjamin Netanyahu vise plusieurs bureaux politiques installés à Jérusalem ainsi que le département des sports installé à la maison d'Orient, siège officieux de l'OLP à Jérusalem-Est. Selon lui, Yasser Arafat lui aurait promis de les fermer.

Cette prise de position assez dure ne devrait cependant pas compromettre les négociations en cours sur le retrait de l'armée israélienne de la ville d'Hébron annoncé pour la fin de ce mois. «Le gouvernement reprendra sérieusement les débats à propos du redéploiement à Hébron, tout en suivant de près le respect par l'autre partie des accords passés», a déclaré Benjamin Netanyahu.

Le retrait de l'armée de la majeure partie de la ville a déjà pris plus de quatre mois de retard. Un plan de redéploiement présenté jeudi par le ministre de la défense Yitzhak Mordechai n'a pas reçu l'aval du mini-cabinet de M. Netanyahu et une nouvelle réunion des ministres chargés de ce dossier n'a pas encore été fixée.

## SECON



**Comme dans** de nombreux pays, la confiance est loin de régner entre les malades jordaniens et leurs médecins. La Jordanie a hérité du Liban le niveau médical le plus élevé des pays arabes et Amman draine non seulement les malades du Golfe, d'Arabie Saoudite, d'Irak, du Yémen mais aussi du Soudan, de la Libye et bientôt d'Algérie.

En deux ans, cinq nouvelles cliniques ont pris place dans la compétition dont deux ayant une capacité de 350 lits et que rien ne distingue des centres européens les mieux équipés dans les spécialités les plus difficiles comme la chirurgie cardio-vasculaire ou la neuro-chirurgie. Et pour s'occuper de ces services, uniquement des spécialistes jordaniens.

En dehors des étrangers et des malades aisés possédant une assurance privée, les trois quarts des Jordaniens ne peuvent se permettre de recevoir des soins nécessaires dans ces cliniques privées et sont obligés de se tourner vers les institutions publiques bondées en permanence. Sans parler d'une proportion non négligeable de la population qui ne bénéficie d'aucune couverture sociale. N'ayant pas même de quoi se faire enlever les amygdales et qui, lorsque survient un gros problème de santé, n'a que la misère comme espoir de guérison.

L'absence de confiance entre malades et médecins est alimentée en permanence par des histoires mille fois gonflées par la vingtaine d'hebdomadaires de scandale qui existent dans ce pays racontant des erreurs médicales relevant plus de la science-fiction que de la réalité. Des histoires écrites par des pseudo-journalistes n'ayant comme diplôme que celui de la faculté de nuire et visant surtout à vendre à une population friande d'histoire un maximum de journaux.

Mais la raison principale de la perte de crédibilité de nombreux médecins jordaniens découle surtout du comportement inhumain de certains spécialistes très doués en commerce et qui se servent des malades et d'une société naïve et croyante pour s'enrichir.

Ces «requins» sont certes minoritaires et montrés du doigt pour leur habileté à dupier des familles. D'autre part, grâce à des commissions payées à un vaste réseau de collaborateurs allant des chauffeurs de taxi à l'adoption aux propriétaires d'appartements meublés en passant par des relais actifs dans certaines cliniques et ambassades, ils alimentent sans cesse leur recrutement et leur pratique de la médecine commerciale.

Le pouvoir de ces «requins» tient aussi à l'absence d'un conseil de l'ordre digne de ce nom qui les couvre indirectement par son inertie. Ils bénéficient de plus d'une couverture médiatique qui leur accorde une grande et un humanisme irréprochables, allant jusqu'à vanter chaque mois leurs «avant-premières» mondiales que les occidentaux ne savent pas faire. Il convient de rajouter qu'en dehors du pourcentage classique que certains spécialistes reversent à leurs intermédiaires, le respect confraternel n'existe pas vraiment et le vol des patients entre eux est monnaie courante.

Mais rassurez-vous, M. M. parmi les 11.000 médecins jordaniens, cette «organisation» limitée est fortement active. Elle ne parvient tout de même pas à empêcher les honnêtes gens de travailler de façon correcte et compétente. ■

Souhail Al Sweis

## Un climat tendu après d'importantes émeutes

La Jordanie a connu cette semaine des troubles importants dans le sud du pays à la suite de l'entrée en vigueur de l'augmentation du prix du pain. De nombreux manifestants ont réclamé le retrait de cette mesure et la démission du Premier ministre Abdel Karim Kabariti. Si les rues de Kérak, Tafleeh ou Ma'an sont désormais calmes en raison de la présence d'importantes forces policières et militaires, la situation politique et sociale reste cependant tendue.

Après une semaine tendue marquée par deux jours d'émeutes assez importantes dans le sud du pays (voir encadré), la Jordanie semble aujourd'hui avoir retrouvé son calme. Un retour à la normale dû en grande partie à la présence massive de policiers et de militaires, notamment à Kérak. Un couvre-feu allégé a été maintenu à Kérak, des policiers et des soldats continuant de patrouiller dans la ville. L'allègement de ces mesures de sécurité devrait se poursuivre dans les jours à venir jusqu'à ce que la ville retrouve une vie normale.

Plusieurs partis politiques d'opposition, le parti Hached, proche du Front démocratique pour la Libération de la Palestine, et le parti baasiste arabe jordanien, ont déclaré leur soutien au gouvernement de démissionner aujourd'hui la libération de nombreux membres ou

émeutes. Selon les partis jordaniens de gauche, une quarantaine de cadres politiques seraient sous les verrous à la suite de ces émeutes. Officiellement, 130 personnes accusées d'avoir déclenché ou pris part aux manifestations violentes, ont été appréhendées à Kérak après les émeutes. Mardi, une dizaine d'adolescents n'ayant, selon les autorités jordaniennes, «commis aucun acte criminel» a déjà été relâché. Des libérations qui devraient continuer dans les jours à venir.

Le front de l'Action islamique a lui déjà appelé à d'autres manifestations. Il voulait organiser une marche pacifique rassemblant «un million d'affamés» vendredi dans la capitale. Mais cette marche n'a pas été autorisée par le ministère de l'Intérieur. Déchargé par le roi Hussein de toute responsabilité dans les troubles

que la Jordanie a connus la semaine dernière, le FAI a besoin aujourd'hui de rappeler son opposition aux projets gouvernementaux d'augmentation du prix du pain. Une prise de position qu'il entend bien continuer de faire entendre de manière non-violente, allant ainsi contre les nombreuses idées reçues qui lui donnent une image d'organisation violente ou terroriste.

Dans les rangs parlementaires, un certain mécontentement se fait aussi entendre. L'interruption de la session parlementaire extraordinaire a provoqué la colère de certains députés qui ont l'impression que leurs voix n'influent pas vraiment sur la politique gouvernementale et que leur rôle reste limité.

De plus, les récentes déclarations du Premier ministre Abdel Karim Kabariti ne vont pas

dans le sens des revendications des manifestants. La démission du gouvernement jordanien qui avait été demandée par les manifestants mais aussi par les députés et les partis d'opposition ne semble pas être à l'ordre du jour. «Je ne vais pas démissionner. Je suis de très près content de l'action de mon gouvernement», a déclaré M. Kabariti. Il a rappelé qu'il ne reviendrait pas sur la décision de pratiquement tripler le prix du pain. Il a insisté sur le fait que les dépenses publiques devaient encore être réduites pour combler le déficit budgétaire, demandant notamment à l'administration et aux ministères de dépenser le moins possible.

Contrastant avec le ton ferme de M. Kabariti, le roi Hussein a lui promis d'engager un dialogue démocratique une fois que la situation serait à nouveau calme. Il a annoncé que certains changements auraient bientôt lieu de façon à permettre au peuple de vivre dans de meilleures conditions. «Tout d'abord, nous voulons voir la situation revenir au calme et ensuite nous essaierons d'aider à améliorer les choses. Nous allons faire tout ce que nous pouvons pour aider les gens à réaliser leurs espérances dans le cadre de la démocratie et du respect des droits de l'Homme, du respect de la vie parlementaire et du respect d'un gouvernement dont l'objectif est de servir les intérêts du peuple», a déclaré le souverain hachémite.

Il a même laissé entendre que des augmentations de salaires étaient à l'étude, tranchant ainsi avec la politique d'austérité appliquée par M. Kabariti. Dans un discours délivré mardi dans le nord du pays à Ramtha, une



Samedi à Kérak, les manifestants commencent à se rassembler en début d'après-midi sous l'œil des forces de sécurité.

région où il jouit d'une grande popularité, le roi Hussein a à nouveau insisté sur le besoin d'aller de l'avant sur la voie du dialogue.

Il reste à savoir maintenant si cette proposition de dialogue suffira à ramener le calme dans le pays. Car c'est avant tout pour lutter contre le coût de la vie et l'inflation des prix que les Jordaniens sont descendus dans la rue.

Or il ne semble pas que le gouvernement d'Abdel Karim Kabariti soit prêt à revenir sur sa politique économique et la hausse du prix du pain. ■

Saada Kilani et Olivier Bras

## Amman le héros de Kérak

Nazih Ammarin, connu depuis longtemps pour ses positions modérées, est devenu un héros pour la population de Kérak parce qu'il a été le seul député parmi neuf autres députés de Kérak à avoir critiqué la décision du gouvernement de pratiquement tripler le prix du pain.

Alors que d'importantes émeutes se déroulaient vendredi et samedi dans le sud du pays, tout le monde s'intéressait aux relations conflictuelles qui existaient entre M. Ammarin et le Premier ministre Abdel Karim Kabariti.

La popularité de ce député s'est accrue lorsque celui-ci a reçu un coup de téléphone du Premier ministre. Au cours de cette conversation, M. Am-

marin s'est fait insulté pour avoir accepté de jouer le rôle d'intermédiaire entre les émeutiers et le gouvernement. Le ministre des Transports, Jamal Saraihi, qui est aussi un député de Kérak, l'a ensuite aussi appelé pour l'insulter.

Dès lors, M. Ammarin est devenu une victime et un héros pour avoir osé affronter le gouvernement.

Et dans les émeutes et les actes de vandalisme qui se sont produits à Kérak, la clinique du Dr. Ammarin est restée intacte. Et même le gouverneur de Kérak a envoyé un télégramme au roi Hussein



Le député Nazih Ammarin

pour protester contre les propos tenus par des membres de son gouvernement. M. Ammarin et Kabariti se sont finalement réconciliés. Mais avec cette crise, Ammarin est devenu le symbole de l'intégrité et le héros de Kérak. ■ S.K.

## France

## La sculpture s'invite dans la rue

Depuis plusieurs semaines, les Champs-Élysées se sont transformés en immense musée de plein-air pour accueillir 48 sculptures monumentales. Une exposition qui rassemble aussi bien les œuvres de Giacometti ou César que celles d'artistes moins connus.

**Les champs de la sculpture** - titre donné par la Ville de Paris à cette exposition qui sont des sentiers battus -, offrent à des dizaines de milliers de promeneurs étonnés un panorama à ciel ouvert de la sculpture moderne européenne, depuis la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle jusqu'aux années soixante. Installées sous les 25 mètres de part et d'autre de la plus belle avenue du monde sur un parc d'un kilomètre, ces œuvres gigantesques ont été soigneusement alignées à quatre mètres des arbres, sans que l'on ait touché à la moindre fleur dans un environnement qui est, à lui seul, un monument historique.

A tout seigneur tout honneur: c'est le monumental *Balzac* de Rodin qui ouvre la marche, installé sur un énorme socle au milieu du Rond-Point des Champs-Élysées. La statue, commandée au sculpteur en 1891 et exposée au Salon de 1898, avait à l'époque fait scandale et avait été refusée, et ce n'est qu'en 1939 qu'elle fut finalement installée près d'un carrefour parisien d'où elle n'avait jusqu'à présent jamais bougé.

A l'autre bout du parcours, place de la Concorde, une quarante-neuvième «œuvre» n'est visible qu'une fois la nuit tombée: c'est l'éclairage en bleu intense de l'obélisque de Louxor, imaginé en 1958 par le champion du bleu qui fut le peintre Yves Klein, mais réalisé pour la première fois seulement en 1983. Tout près de l'obélisque, *La fleur qui marche* de Fernand Léger, dressé à une hauteur de six mètres ses pétales de bronze peint de couleurs vives.

En cours de route, on croise, en faisant le tour des sculptures solidement ancrées sur leurs socles, toutes les tendances de l'art contemporain: cubisme, surréalisme, abstraction, «nouveau réalisme», cinéisme etc... Tous les matériaux aussi, du bronze au polyester en passant par la pierre, le fer, le granit, le bois, l'acier, l'aluminium,

le béton et la résine.

Quelques vedettes très remarquées attirent plus particulièrement l'œil des passants: *La femme debout* de Picasso, qui trouve le moyen d'être légère et juvénile malgré ses sept tonnes de bronze et ses six mètres de haut, le *Prophète* de Pablo Gargallo, dernière œuvre réalisée par le sculpteur avant sa mort, avec sa technique du métal découpé laissant dans la sculpture d'importantes parties évidées. *La grande musicienne*, nue, toute en courbes, de Henri Laurens, bien éloigné ici du cubisme de ses premières années ou *Le verrou* d'Henry Moore, avec ses formes rondes embollées les unes dans les autres comme des os articulés.

Non loin de là, *l'Orage et l'Ouragan*, deux puissantes statues en bronze de Germaine Richier, font écho à l'énigmatique *Couple assis* du sculpteur anglais Lynn Chadwick, dont les visages sont remplacés par des formes géométriques, et à un autre *Couple* en pierre, presque abstrait dans ses vigoureuses formes élançées, du Belge Eugène Dodeigne.

Les 24 triangles en acier de la *Fontaine 12x12 triangles* convexes de Pol Bury, spécialiste belge des sculptures hydrauliques mues par le poids de l'eau, s'agitent avec légèreté dans un bruissement syncope. Autre *Fontaine* en mouvement: celle du Suisse Jean Tinguely, une machine en fer animée par des moteurs et qui projette de l'eau, tandis que juste à côté, le radar éolien du Grec Takis



Près d'une cinquantaine de sculptures sont exposées sur l'avenue des Champs-Élysées à Paris.

dresse au sommet d'une vis d'Archimède un bras métallique où frémissent au moindre soufflé d'air deux plaques d'aluminium.

## Diversité et interrogations

Deux œuvres ont été créées spécialement pour l'exposition des Champs-Élysées: *Captain Nemo*, une monumentale accumulation d'alambics de parfumerie en cuivre réalisée par le Français Arman, et la *Sphère Lutetia* de Jesus Rafael Soto (Vénézuélien installé en France), dont les centaines de tiges métalliques suspendues, peintes en rouge, blanc et noir, oscillent légèrement au vent dans une infinie variation d'effets optiques.

Quant à la pittoresque *Blum, Nana jaune* de Niki de Saint-Phall, une énorme baigneuse en polyester aux fesses rebondies, gonflées comme un ballon, courant sur une plage imaginaire, elle amuse beaucoup les promeneurs, sans visiblement convaincre bon nombre d'entre eux qui semblent se poser des

questions sur certains aspects de l'art contemporain.

Incertitudes que ne suscitent pas les sculptures de Maillol, Rodin et Bourdelle présentées en plusieurs points du parcours. L'extrême diversité des tendances de la sculpture européenne du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle se manifeste encore dans d'autres œuvres comme celles des Espagnols Julio Gonzalez, Eduardo Chillida et Antoni Clavé, des Suisses Max Bill et François Stahly, l'un des rares sculpteurs à concevoir pour le plein-air des œuvres en bois.

La liste est longue des artistes réputés ou moins connus, dont les œuvres trônent sur les Champs-Élysées. C'est la deuxième fois que cette avenue accueille ce type d'événement, après les colossales statues obèses du Colombien Fernando Botero en 1992. Le succès avait alors été aussi conséquent que pour cette exposition qui devrait à l'automne s'envoler pour Tokyo. ■

Claudine Canetti

## Zarka

## Un festival de problèmes

Le deuxième festival pour enfants de Zarka connaît toute une série de difficultés dues notamment à son emplacement. La cohabitation est en effet difficile avec les footballeurs privés du stade municipal pour une durée de quinze jours.

«C'est fini. Nous avons eu tellement d'ennuis que nous n'allons pas recommencer l'année prochaine», déclare l'un des organisateurs du festival, Fayez Al Qaisy.

Tout s'est mal engagé depuis le début de cette édition 1996. L'année dernière, pour le premier festival des enfants, la municipalité avait mis à disposition le seul grand parc public de la ville, dans le centre-ville. Mais depuis, le parc a été loué à un particulier et Zarka, la deuxième ville du royaume en population qui compte un million d'habitants, ne dispose plus d'aucun endroit pour accueillir ce festival. Si ce n'est le stade municipal de football.

Les footballeurs sont furieux de se voir déloger de leur territoire, ce qui est bien compréhensible. «C'est le plus grand stade de foot de la Jordanie», explique le responsable des clubs de football de Zarka, Mohammed Taher Khawaldi.

«60% des matchs ont lieu ici. Nous avons du retarder tous les matchs du championnat et les footballeurs ne peuvent plus s'entraîner».

Jusqu'à la dernière minute, les footballeurs ont tenté de faire revenir la municipalité sur sa décision. Et ce n'est que le jour même de l'ouverture du festival que ses organisateurs ont reçu la confirmation de l'attribution du terrain. «Nous étions alors prêts à faire ce festival dans la rue», déclare l'un des organisateurs, Kassem Smirat.

Mais les ennemis du festival ne s'arrêtent pas là. Le nom de Zarka n'étant pas considéré comme très «vendeur» pour les grandes compagnies, il a été impossible de trouver des sponsors. «Toutes les compagnies que nous avons contactées nous ont répondu qu'elles étaient prêtes à nous aider si ce festival avait lieu à Amman», se lamentent Fayez Al Qaisy.

Les organisateurs se sont retrouvés avec tellement peu de

ressources qu'ils n'ont pu imprimer ni affiche ni programme.

Pour faire de la publicité à ce festival, ils voulaient, comme l'année passée, organiser un défilé à travers la ville. Mais manque de chance, en raison de la situation tendue que connaît le pays, le préfet leur a interdit: on aurait pu prendre leur cortège pour celui de manifestants protestant contre la hausse du prix du pain.

## Privés d'eau

«La seule aide que nous ayons trouvée, c'est auprès de l'Ambassade de France qui nous a prêté six films, un projecteur et un écran, et qui a formé un projectionniste» confie Fayez Al Qaisy. Les films sont en français, sous-titrés en arabe. «Les enfants sont pour la plupart beaucoup trop jeunes pour pouvoir déchiffrer assez rapidement les sous-titres. Mais ils sont tout de même très contents de voir les

images.»

Le festival n'est pas vraiment le bienvenu sur le stade de football et les employés municipaux chargés de son entretien le font bien sentir.

Au moindre coup de vent, les spectateurs sont enveloppés par des nuages de sable. Les organisateurs attendent toujours un réservoir d'eau qui leur permettrait d'arroser le sol... et d'éteindre la soif des gosses.

Le service d'ordre est lui aussi assuré par des gardiens du stade. Et c'est à coup de baguettes que les gamins qui se permettent de danser ou de courir sont ramenés sur leurs chaises.

Et malgré tout cela, le festival est un succès. Des centaines d'enfants s'y pressent tous les soirs.

Trop heureux de pouvoir enfin assister à Zarka des activités organisées à leur intention. ■

Claudine Assad

## Le programme du festival

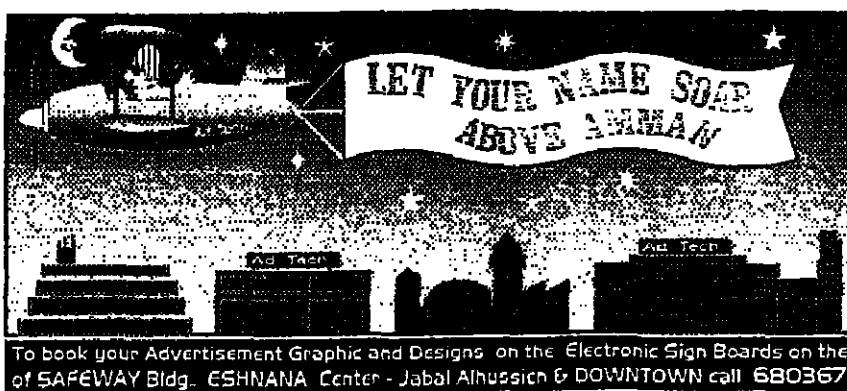
Le Festival des enfants de Zarka se poursuit jusqu'au 28 août au stade municipal. Trois films français sous-titrés en arabe sont notamment à l'affiche cette semaine. Tous les jours, les organisateurs ouvrent le micro aux enfants à partir de 18h00.

Jeudi 22 août		Dimanche 25 août	
19h30: Forum sur la protection de la famille	21h00: «Cendrillon» par le club d'arts populaires et de théâtre de Zarka	19h30: Groupe folklorique Braheem-al-Hanouna	21h00: Cinéma «Salut Paris»
Vendredi 23 août		Lundi 26 août	
19h30: Groupe folklorique de l'Association ichthène et circassienne	21h00: Cinéma: «Le roi et l'oiseau»	19h30: groupe musical	20h30: spectacle
Samedi 24 août		19h30: Association Omar Inb El Khatib	21h00: Groupe Dad Dayat
19h30: le monde de Walt Disney	20h30: Démonstration de karaté	19h30: groupe Laia Lima	21h30: Cinéma «Le petit diable»
21h: Théâtre: «La boîte aux notes magiques»		19h30: Musique	20h30: Distribution de certificats aux participants
		21h00: Chorale de Zarka	



## Activities

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French Cultural Centre	637009		
Goethe Institute	641993		
Cervantes Institute (Spanish)	610858	Sports Clubs	
Turkish Cultural Centre	639777	Orthodox Club	810491
Haya Arts Centre	665195	Royal Automobile Club	815410
Y.W.C.A.	641793	Royal Shooting Club	736572
Y.W.M.A.	664251	Royal Chess Club	673713
Dar al Funun	643252	Royal Racing Club	09-801233
Alia Art Gallery	639303	Jordan Bridge Club	676940
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THE STAR'S

COMPUTING &amp; HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

The Internet as an effective distribution channel:

## Marginal costs, no more in cyberspace

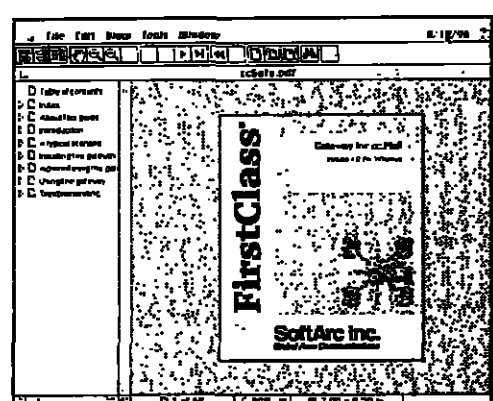
By Jawad Abbassi  
Special to The Star

SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT has been a very lucrative business for the successful developers. The success stories of Microsoft, Adobe, Novell and Netscape, to name a few, all attest to this. These successful software companies have capitalized on one of software's peculiar features, namely the very low marginal cost of producing it.

The bulk of cost associated in developing software goes to the initial research, design, code writing and manual writing stages, while the cost of producing an extra unit of software (marginal cost) is usually very low and is mainly the cost of printing manuals and packaging the product. This underlines software's profitability since marginal cost will always be lower than marginal revenue (defined as revenue generated by every additional software package produced). A brilliant example of this would be the DOS and Windows operating systems that come installed on every new computer made by the big computer makers like Dell and Compaq; these companies pay Microsoft the price of every copy installed while the cost to Microsoft is virtually zero (the product is already developed and all is needed is to just install it).

The Internet promises to make software development even more of a lucrative business than it already is: it is driving the marginal cost to a point where it becomes negligible. Different software companies have started using the Internet as a medium for distributing their software to their customers which eliminates transportation and packaging costs. A new development on the Internet also promises to eliminate the cost of printing manuals: Adobe has introduced a new format that allows manuals and any printed materials to be viewed on the computer exactly as it appears in real life. Adobe's Portable Document Format (PDF) allows users of any computer platform (Apple, Windows, DOS or UNIX) to view the document regardless of what operating system was used to create it. Furthermore, PDF's seamless integration with the HTML standard of the web promises to broaden the use of this new technology.

With the above new advances in mind, it is hardly surprising that most big software developers are placing their products on the Internet to be downloaded for trial purposes, reviews and retail. Companies like Netscape and Microsoft allow for downloading their web browsers (Navigator and Explorer, respectively) from their web sites ([www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com) & [www.netscape.com](http://www.netscape.com)) which is part of their plans to capture market share in the web browsers business at no cost whatsoever for the cost of maintaining their web presence.



With such a profound effect of the Internet on the marginal cost of producing software, many questions arise regarding two important issues: Pricing of software and Piracy. On the issue of pricing, the diminishing marginal cost should also—if software developers are fair—translate into a decrease in marginal revenue which will translate into lower prices for software. On the piracy note, software developers have to devise new methods for protecting software to ensure that only people who bought the software can use the full potential of a copy downloaded from the Internet. This could happen by incorporating serial numbers for software to allow it to work properly where these serial numbers can't be obtained except after the software's price is paid. Furthermore, the distribution of manuals using the new Adobe technology should also be limited to legitimate buyers of the software. Should the two issues of price and piracy be resolved, we will end up with the Internet as a channel of distribution that is pirates' free and cost effective. The fading of the marginal cost will therefore be to the benefit of both the developers and the users of software.

## One year later, a look at Access and NETS: Measuring up Jordan's on-line services

By Jabra Farid Ghneim  
Special to The Star

IT'S BEEN a little bit more than a year since the establishment of the first on-line services in Jordan; and it's worth taking a look at how the companies in charge of bulletin board services have handled the business involved from a strategic point of view, by examining the elements that make a good on-line service and then applying these elements to the two main BBS—both of which I subscribed to.

Service is one key element to success in cyber services. Service does not consist only of building a good relationship with the customer (even though this is a very important part). A good service includes building a relationship of trust with the customer. Any frustration contributes to dissatisfaction and thus defection from the service. In the case of cyberspace-based services, that relationship of trust is enhanced if, for example, the customer accesses the service successfully every morning and gets his e-mail with minimal frustration.

In the past year I subscribed to both ACCESS and NETS. Employees of both services have been very friendly and extremely helpful. But the big problems were the technical ones. ACCESS for example used a very slow program that would cause serious problems for low end machines. ACCESS tried to fix that with an improved version of the program. Unfortunately, I feel that there was so much pressure to get the new version out that not enough testing was done. The new version suffers from serious bugs that cause conflict between the elements of the old and new versions. In the case of NET, access-time was very often slow. Sometimes getting through would take anywhere

between 5 to 30 minutes. For somebody who just wants to check his e-mail and hurry to work that is a lot.

Content makes or breaks any on-line service. I have watched both companies try to provide the readers with more content. With the exception of a few instances, content has been very poor on both services. For example, with ACCESS, the logos of the major newspapers, newsletters and magazines, have existed for several months now, but with the exception of *The Star* and *Issues* we have not seen any real additions. Most of what exists is admirable but it is not mature enough to satisfy the needs of customers. In addition, potentially good content sources are not updated periodically or used well. I personally was hoping that ACCESS would merge COMPU-LINK, the real-time economic data service—in its bulletin board service, rather than making it a stand-alone service.

I am sure that such consolidation would prove beneficial for both ACCESS, and its users. In both services, chat groups (Forums) and e-mail are fun but not sufficient to make a good on-line service. A suggestion will be adding a library of CD-ROMs for example to serve the information needs of the users. It is unfortunate that, as a user, I do not need to subscribe to an on-line service to look at the general information and numbers that these services offer. I can simply buy a copy of "Jordan Today" and get the same info for one dinar. Both companies started to re-sell Internet access

from Global One as a solution to this deficiency, but most users can't afford that. I know people who access the service using a 386DX and a 2400 Kbps modem.

Management doesn't offend the fans of either service. The people running ACCESS and NETS are people with great and admirable technical talent. Their main problem, though, is that they are not run strategically. There is a wide difference between just management and strategic management. The latter involves a 'mission statement'; a set of principles that drive the company and its activities. I will give the case of ACCESS as an example. A few months ago, I asked a friend of mine, who is a manager at ACCESS, why they did not work hard on more content, like encyclopedias and more magazines and newspapers. The answer conveyed was that the service was running on a tight budget, and that there was no intention to invest more. The second part of the answer was that COMPU-LINK was the primary service and that they preferred to concentrate on it. These answers show lack of a strategic vision. I wondered afterwards if they simply introduced the service just to keep the lines busy. At NETS there have not been major, dynamic changes either.

Since both services are looking towards providing internet access and internet content, I expect that the bulletin board part of the service will decline in importance, in spite of the fact that it has a huge potential that has not been fully tapped yet.

## News update

Jordan's software publishers prepare for GITEK '96

For the first time, Jordan's software publishers will be present at the Gulf Information Technology Exhibition (GITEK), as part of a unified delegation. GITEK '96 is the largest information technology show in the Middle East. It is held annually in Dubai and attracts all the major international and regional companies involved in the region's market.

The Jordanian delegation to GITEK '96 will include IdealSoft, Comsoft, Sedco, Zeine Technological Applications, Arabic Textware, Micro Software and Turath. This group's effort is supported by the Jordan

Export Development Co.

Novell products on HP network servers

Novell and Hewlett-Packard (HP) have signed an agreement allowing HP to distribute Novell products including NetWare, GroupWise and Manage-Wise on any HP NetServer. This paves the way for better integration between Novell software and Hewlett-Packard hardware, which offers customers easier setup and installation. HP's line of PC servers provides a new level of power and scalability for supporting LANs, WANs, Intranets and access to the internet.

## Italian striker raises European standard with stunning debut display

By Simon Barnes

LONDON—Alas, they do not call it a trucco di capello, but Ravanelli's tripletta, or three-goal performance, was emphatically the trick of the day as, after a break of, well, several days at least, the FA Carling Premiership swung back into action again on Saturday, when Liverpool left the Riverside Stadium with a 3-3 draw.

There, in the sultry heat of Teesside, Fabrizio Ravanelli, making a journey from Juventus to Middlesbrough—in past eras the equivalent of making a pilgrimage away from Mecca—swapped three or four chipped passes with head and with foot, on the edge of the opposition penalty area, without once letting the ball touch the ground, with a shag-haired Brazilian playing as Middlesbrough's libero. Is this really a vignette of football in England?

Football's coming home, they told us all through the long summer, but where, pray, is home? Football, once the most

xenophobic institution in England, has gone pell-mell the opposite way: the game has been racked by attack after attack of xenophilia. What is more, there is another Brazilian, Branco, who cannot get into the Middlesbrough side. Is this the ultimate statement of the prevailing mood of the Premiership?

In some ways, Ravanelli's transfer, at 7 million, is the strangest move of the lot. Even as the Premiership expanded in recent seasons and took on such big-name foreigners as Klinsmann and, later, Gullit, the cry went up: ah yes, all very well, but it is in Italy, in Serie A, that you find the real thing. We just get the has-beens. With Ravanelli moving to the Premiership from Italy's footballing Olympus, the game's ancient values have been stood on their heads.

Is the Premiership really now the world's great league? Watch Ravanelli and Emerson perform that interchange and you think, yes: watch their Bra-

zilian team-mate, Juninho, darting here and there in renewed and vitriolic confidence, and you find confirmation.

Or turn to Liverpool and see Barnes gliding about in mid-field in his daff red boots, or McManaman doing his coltish frolics all over the pitch, and you must say again, yes, this is a feast, and let us hope that every match of the endless season is like this: six goals shared, any amount of glorious attacking, a day to put the spring into the step of anyone with a taste for footy.

The match gave us the first goal in the Premiership as Bjornebye, moving sweetly goal-side of the defence, put Liverpool ahead after four minutes from Barnes's free kick. Ravanelli equalized from a penalty, and the moment filled him with a fire that lasted him the rest of the match.

Barnes put Liverpool ahead again, another player getting ahead of a hesitant defence, but then Liverpool, dozing from a quickly-taken free kick,

allowed Cox to cross for Ravanelli to tuck the ball away with predacious glee.

That was half-time, and you know there would be more goals. Fowler put Liverpool ahead, and James's tremendous save from Ravanelli appeared to have made the match safe, but the Silver Fox was allowed once more into the hen-house of the Liverpool defence, and he got enough contact on Mustoe's pass to finish his hat-trick and to go into his now familiar berserker routine of celebration.

All jolly amusing, and so forth, but, after the match, I spoke to the reporter from *Gazzetta dello Sport*, a man with an air of a Borgias cardinal. "A nice match, yes," he agreed. "And perhaps now they will buy some Italian defenders."

Yes, well, rather a good point, actually. The English can now claim to have the most entertaining league in the world. Certainly, the Premiership is a great circus, and unquestionably, it sells a lot of

shirts. This is a great bubble of delight, and those like Ravanelli who come seeking the bubble reputation with the right sincerity find themselves greatly loved.

It is also hard to find in one's heart a dislike for those managers who throw such delightful and skilled attackers at us: it fills hearts and stadiums. And, my dear, you are just nobody on Teesside without your No 11 Ravanelli shirt—and have you got the away-kit version, too?

But, all the same, there is not so much a lack of defence as a lack of seriousness in the Premiership as the season begins. There is abroad a mood almost of frivolity. As if all clubs bar one were really competing for second place.

As if it were necessary to sell style rather than content, entertainment rather than sport. All very well; and a souffe is a wonderful dish. But when it collapses, it is just scrambled eggs.

## When pitching improves, Yankees' slump will end

By Rob Parker

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

NEW YORK—The Yankees' recent slide has nothing to do with team harmony.

It has nothing to do with the additions of Darryl Strawberry and Cecil Fielder. Some believe the Yankees aren't playing the same base-to-base baseball they played earlier in the season and are now just sitting back and waiting for home runs from their two new boppers.

Both theories, though, just don't wash. The Yankees' alarming slide—they had lost seven of 10 before Tuesday night's rout of the California Angels—has everything to do with a good old-fashioned pitching slump. Especially by the starters.

Aside from Andy Pettitte, who has won two of the three in the skid, the starting rotation has been horrid. After Tuesday night's two-thirds of an inning, five-earned-run start by David Weathers, the starters had a chubby 7.51 ERA in the last 11 games, allowing 47 earned runs in 56 1/3 innings. That's a full run worse than the Detroit Tigers, whose staff ERA was an American League-worst 6.53 going into Tuesday night.

No matter how good your hitting is, most teams just aren't going to win many games giving up those numbers.

Is it a reason for alarm? No. Concern? Sure. Just ask Manager Joe Torre. "Am I concerned?" Torre said before the Yankees opened a three-game set with the Angels at the Stadium. "Sure, I'm concerned. Well, not really. I say I'm concerned of why this happened. You know you're going to go through a little bit of a 1/8bad streak. You just don't plan on everybody doing it the same time."

Though many have struggled, it's hard not to notice Weathers the most. He seems to do it every time out. The right-hander has been horrendous since coming over from the Marlins for Mark Hutton. In four starts, Weathers is 0-2 with a 14.81 ERA, allowing 17 earned runs in 10 2/3 innings.

"It was just a matter of time before the team had a slump," second baseman Mariano Duncan said. "The pitchers haven't done their jobs."

"Sometimes, when the pitchers do their jobs, we don't get the hit in the right situation. But there's no way I can give up on this ballclub."

Or the starting staff. Except for Weathers, that is.

After yet another awful start, you can bet Torre has seen enough. He might try anybody in that fifth-starter's spot until David Cone is ready to rejoin the team. Cone, fighting his way back from a small aneurysm in his right shoulder, starts Wednesday at Double-A Norwich and is shooting for a Sept. 6.

If Cone comes back, even at 75 percent, he'd be better than a lot of pitchers currently in the majors, including Weathers. The addi-

tion of a healthy Cone would make the Yankees tough to beat in a short series. For now, the Yankees must just play through some unseen bumps in the road.

"It's like when hitters go into slumps," Strawberry said. "Pitchers go into slumps, too."

"It's a long season. Everybody's going to run into dog days. You just have to overcome the dog days by staying focused."

The Seattle Mariners are a perfect example of doing just that. Before they came to the Stadium this past weekend and took three of four from the Yankees, the Mariners had a 1-8 homestand. It wasn't their hitting that did them in during that sorry stretch. It was their pitching. But they didn't give in. They played through it. And even though the Mariners' pitching wasn't great, it was better than the Yankees'.

Baseball is all about pitching. It always was and always will be. With that being the case, the Yankees can still feel good. This season, the Yankees' largest losing streak is three games. The only other team to avoid such a lengthy slide is the Braves. Yes, they have good pitching, too.

During the slide, the Yankees lost just three games off their lead in the AL East. People should stop talking about the 12-game lead they had. They were never going to win the division by double-digits, anyway. There are too many good teams fighting for the playoffs.

"I've been on winning teams before and this happened to us in 1990 in Cincinnati and 1993 in Philadelphia," Duncan said. "A lot of people thought we were going to choke it up because we had big leads and had them cut down."

"But I feel good about this ballclub here."

So should the fans. Barring injuries, the Yankees' starting staff is as good as any in the AL. There are enough veterans with solid track records to believe that things will only get better. Torre believes that, too.

"I can't be concerned," Torre said. "They're healthy and experienced. And if you look at the press guide, their numbers are better than the last couple times around."

If you're going to slump, it's better to do it now rather than wait until the last two weeks of the season. "Every good team goes through a period where you have slumps," Strawberry said. "You just work your way through it."

Duncan agreed. "No matter how good you are, the team's got to slump. We'll be all right. How can you panic with a ballclub like we have?"

Honestly, you can't. But the slide gave everybody a glimpse of what happens to a team, even a good team such as the Yankees, when your pitchers don't pitch well—you usually lose.

## Robson ready to reign in Spain

THE CHATTERING stilled, a hush descended and the smell of power flooded into the sprawling trophy rooms at the Nou Camp stadium. The sea of journalists parted as the line of unsmiling men in dark suits filed in and took their seats either side of a callow youth in a black T-shirt. At the end of the table, Bobby Robson looked on.

Jose Luis Nunez, the Barcelona president and one of the most influential men in European football, fielded most of the questions. Occasionally, when he made a joke, the journalists laughed and an extra puff of smoke rose from the cigar of Nicolas Cassaus, the club vice-president. Juan Gaspar, the money man, the transfer wheeler-dealer, stared straight ahead.

Then, after a short hiatus, all eyes turned to Ronaldo, 19, the Brazilian whom Robson made the most expensive footballer in the world for a week before Newcastle United paid 15 million pounds for Alan Shearer. This was his formal introduction to Barcelona and, outside, the crowds were waiting to greet him.

The striker, who cost more than 13 million pounds when Barcelona bought him from PSV Eindhoven, muttered a few shy words of Portuguese and the press conference was brought to a close. Before he skipped down the stairs to the car park, he posed for photographers with Robson and Nunez, each locking hands for the cameras.

If there ever had been a honeymoon period for Robson in his new role as the manager of one of the world's biggest club sides, that handshake on Monday afternoon brought it to a close. Now that Ronaldo has arrived, a fiercely expectant press and public are assuming that everything will go like clockwork.

In the six weeks that Robson has been in Spain, he has been plunged into a relentless series of pre-season matches arranged by his predecessor, Cruyff. He has been beset by injuries to leading players, but still the media have been dismayed by two inconsequential defeats. Like the arrival of Shearer in the North East, Ronaldo is being seen as the catalyst for an explosion of success.

Later on Monday, as the sun set behind the main stand of the Olympic stadium, Ronaldo trained with his team-mates for the first time. By the end of the day, the press were pestering Robson about whether he would play for a full 90 minutes against the Argentinian side, San Lorenzo, in the Joan Gamper trophy Tuesday night (August 20).

Robson said: "He has just had a two-week vacation, he only arrived in the country on Saturday night and suddenly everyone thinks he is going to play a full game, score three goals and that everything will suddenly be all right. But he is not in the right condition. He will play 20 minutes at the end but we do not want him to pull a muscle and put

himself out for the start of the season on September 10."

Robson, who managed England between 1982 and 1990 and came here after winning two Portuguese championships with Porto, will play Ronaldo as a lone striker, supported by the Bulgarian, Stoiichkov, on the left, and another Brazilian, Giovanni, in front of a midfield that is likely to boast the Croatian, Prosinecki, and the Portuguese, Figo. There are, though, no Englishmen in his polyglot team.

"I thought about going for Shearer before we signed Ronaldo," Robson said. "I spoke to Ray Harford on a couple of occasions and he said the boy was not for sale, so we looked elsewhere."

"He (Ronaldo) is an incredibly gifted player. He is a capable boy and very intelligent. He is another Romario on the pitch and someone with Shearer's sense of it." He handles himself well.

"When it looked as though Manchester United were going to buy Nadal, there was a slim chance that Lee Sharpe might come here as part of that deal. We had agreed a price with Alex Ferguson for Nadal but I don't think they could meet his wage demands."

"It is not really a conscious decision not to have any English players. It is just that the market there has become a bit inflated."